



INTERNATIONAL TROTSKYISM

1929 - 1985 A DOCUMENTED

ANALYSIS OF THE MOVEMENT

ROBERT J. ALEXANDER



International Trotskyism

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A D O C U M E N T E D

A N A L Y S I S O F

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Robert J. Alexander

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Preface

When, fifteen or more years ago I was working on my earlier study of Trotskyism in Latin America, I discovered the fact that no one had ever written an overall study of International Trotskyism. Further investigation confirmed this observation.

The late Pierre Frank wrote a small book on the history of the Fourth International. There have been a number of studies, particularly doctoral dissertations, on the Trotskyist movement in particular countries. There has also been a good deal of historiography—as opposed to history—of the movement, particularly in the form of publication and extensive annotation of the writings of Leon Trotsky, which is exceedingly useful. The late George Breitman of the United States, and Pierre Broué and Rodolphe Prager of France were particularly productive in this field.

After later working on a history of the International Right Opposition of the 1930s, my curiosity was further piqued about the history of Trotskyism. The Right Opposition did not survive World War II. International Trotskyism, on the other hand, was still alive and relatively healthy four decades after the end of that conflict. The question naturally arose in my mind as to why these two dissident factions of International Communism should experience such different fates. (Perhaps part of the answer will emerge from the present volume.)

In view of the lack of a general survey of the movement I finally decided to undertake to write one. Had I known when I began how complex a project it would turn out to be, I might well have hesitated to turn my hand to it. In the beginning, I had no idea how many countries had had Trotskyist movements at one time or another, or of how many different kinds of Trotskyists there

have been, and hence the proliferation of different kinds of parties and groups pledging their basic loyalty to the ideas and program of Leon Trotsky.

This book deals with the world movement which Leon Trotsky established after his exile from the Soviet Union in 1929. Except for some background material in the first chapter about the origins and progress of the splits in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the 1920s, I have deliberately not dealt with the Trotskyist tendency in the USSR, which in any case was totally liquidated before and during the Great Purges. For those interested in that aspect of Trotskyism, the best source is undoubtedly the French periodical *Cahiers Leon Trotsky*, which devoted two complete issues, numbers 6 and 7/8 of 1980 and 1981 to this subject. It also dedicated issue number 18 of June 1984 to Christian Rakovsky, the last of the important Soviet Trotskyist leaders to surrender to Joseph Stalin, and who was ultimately murdered in the purges.

One other omission should be noted. Except for the case of the United States I have not dealt in the pages that follow with the international movement headed by Lyndon Larouche. In making this decision I was to some degree influenced by a comment of one of my correspondents to the effect that to do so would be similar to including a history of fascism as part of a history of Italian Socialism—quite inappropriate.

However, I had another, and perhaps better, reason for this omission. It is clear that in the case of the National Caucus of Labor Committees (and its later incarnations) that the NCLC did originate as a dissident Trotskyist group and therefore it is legitimate to trace its subsequent evolution. The case is not the same with the international organization established under Larouche's aegis. The various national groups (outside of the United States) were established after Larouche and his followers had given up virtually all pretenses of being Trotskyists, and therefore they are not, properly speaking, a

part of the history of International Trotskyism.

I decided to try to make this study for at least two reasons. First, international Trotskyism has been a sufficiently significant tendency in world politics over a sufficiently long period—considerably more than half a century—to make it important for its story to be told. In the second place, I felt that I had both a sufficient interest in the subject and enough background and tangential contact with the movement to qualify me to be its first overall historian.

Certainly, from the point of view of most Trotskyists, I suspect that I have one major handicap as a historian of their movement: I do not belong to it. Indeed, in 1937, as a very unimportant young member of the so-called "Clarity Caucus" of the Socialist Party of the United States [in fact, one of the most confused groups to appear in U.S. left-wing politics] I was one of those who strongly supported the expulsion of the Trotskyites from the SPUSA. By then, Bolshevism, whether in its Leninist, Stalinist or its Trotskyist form, had completely lost whatever passing attraction it might once have had for me.

Hence, I write from a Democratic Socialist or Social Democratic background. Therefore, I shall undoubtedly have interpretations of the Trotskyist movement which members of all of its various factions will consider mistaken. My only hope is that this present volume can qualify for the kind of assessment which the late Joseph Hansen gave in a two-part review of my earlier work on Latin American Trotskyism, which can be summed up as "for a Social Democrat, he's done a pretty good job."

My own political background is relevant to one stylistic aspect of this book. As an old socialist I was accustomed to referring to Leon Trotsky's followers as "Trotskyites." They prefer to be called "Trotskyists."

For reasons of literary diversity I shall use both terms. Also, unless otherwise noted, any underscoring or italics which appear in

quoted material in this work are as they were in what is being quoted.

One other comment. A few of those who have been kind enough to help me in gathering material for this book have raised objections to my "research methods." One of these people wrote, "I cannot agree with the method which consists in writing books through interviews and newspapers, without any interest in the archives. . . ." To some degree I must plead guilty to the "indictment" implied in this remark. I have not relied to a major degree on "the archives," whether those of Trotsky at Harvard, the collections in Paris, Amsterdam, the Hoover Institution at Stanford, or in the Socialist Workers Party headquarters in New York City. However, given the nature of the work which I have been trying to produce, and the segment of my life which I was willing and able to devote to this study, I think that my research approach has been an adequate and useful one.

First of all, I think that a perusal of the bibliography at the end of this work will show that I have relied on a great deal more than "interviews and newspapers," although these have been of considerable importance. Where they have been available I have relied on secondary works dealing with segments of the subject under study. These were particularly useful for the period of the 1930s, and included the annotated writings of Leon Trotsky in both English and French, and historical memoirs of such people as James Cannon and Georges Vereeken of Belgium. They have also included doctoral dissertations from several countries as well as collections of documents of the Fourth International in both English and French.

For the period since the death of Trotsky such secondary material has frequently been lacking. Indeed, the history of the Trotskyist movement in most countries had not been written in any systematic way before I began working on this book. So to try to gather the material relevant to writing such studies I have resorted in the first instance to corre-

spondence with Trotskyists, ex-Trotskyists and some observers of the movement. My correspondents have quite literally been from all parts of the world.

In writing these people I requested a variety of things from them. I asked for publications of the various Trotskyist organizations of their countries—including newspapers, pamphlets and other such material. I also asked innumerable questions about the movement in their areas.

I have been most fortunate in the replies which I received to these queries. In some cases, long exchanges of letters provided me with "original" material not elsewhere available. In a few instances my correspondents have written very extensive memoranda outlining the history of all or part of the movement's history in their countries. In the case of Australia I was sent three tapes of lectures on the history of Trotskyism in that country given at a "summer camp" of the Australian Socialist Workers Party.

In a few instances these materials have been complemented and added to by interviews with people who have been involved in the Trotskyist movement in one part of the world or another. Such discussions have been particularly helpful in the cases of Trotskyism in the United States, France, Belgium and Great Britain.

All of this research has involved something in the nature of fitting together a jigsaw puzzle. There are presented in these pages studies of Trotskyism in various parts of the world such as have never appeared in print before. Even in the case of the United States there has never been published an overall study of the movement. Nor, aside from the thin volume of Pierre Frank, has there ever appeared an overall treatment of the Fourth International and the various competing groups into which it split after 1953. Hopefully, through the alternative methods which I have used to acquire my material, I have been able within the five years spent on this volume to piece together the puzzle of international Trotskyism in

such a way as to present a valuable picture of the movement throughout the world.

One further note relevant to my research techniques may be in order. The reader will note that the termination dates of my discussions of various organizations, and even of the movement in various countries, differ from case to case. These dates have been determined by the recentness of information which I received by the time I had to bring the manuscript to a close. Two cases in point are the withdrawal of the Australian Socialist Workers Party from the United Secretariat, and the violent split in the ranks of the British Healyites—both events occurred in the latter part of 1985 just as I was completing the manuscript, and so could be referred to. In many instances, however, the latest information available to me on a particular group considerably antedated 1985.

Every author owes obligations to people who have aided him in getting a book into print. Because of the complexity of the subject of the present volume, and the dispersed nature of the material I needed to acquire in order to write it, my obligations are particularly heavy and extensive. I certainly owe something to the scores of people listed in the bibliography who either allowed me to interview them or who corresponded more or less extensively with me on the subject. However, a number of these deserve special mention.

First, I must note the late Max Shachtman, who was a good friend, and who gave me many insights into the history of the movement (naturally from his own point of view of a founder and later heretic of International Trotskyism). In somewhat the same category was the late Joseph Hansen, who gave me much help on my early researches on Latin American Trotskyism and was, I think, a gentle critic of the results of those researches.

The late George Breitman was particularly helpful in putting me in touch with basic sources for the present volume, as well as giving me the benefit of his observations

of the movement over half a century. Also, of course, his annotated collection of the writings of Trotsky are a basic source of information for any study of the Trotskyist movement.

The same is true of the collection, and even more extensive annotation of Trotsky's writings by Pierre Broué. M. Broué has also been very helpful in answering questions, and in reading critically the first draft of part of the section on Spain.

The late Pierre Frank was also a very willing correspondent, and provided me with a copy of his book on the Fourth International. He also facilitated my contacts with other French members of the movement.

During my first visit to Paris in search of material for this book, in 1982, Rodolphe Prager was of inestimable help, not only postponing his summer vacation to put me in contact with people of several factions of International Trotskyism but also providing me with some very important bibliographical material. He has also been a very willing answerer of many queries to him, both written and oral.

During that same 1982 visit to Europe Miss Nadya De Beule, historian of the early years of the Belgian Trotskyist movement, was exceedingly hospitable in putting me in contact with various people among the Trotskyists and ex-Trotskyists of that country. She also was kind enough to give me a copy of her own study and xerox copies of many early Belgian Trotskyist publications, as well as to criticize the first draft of the chapter on Belgium.

Ernest Mandel, the best-known Trotskyist economist and leader of both the largest Belgian Trotskyist group and the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USEC), has also been extremely helpful. He answered numerous queries about a range of subjects, sent me important material, and gave me a very helpful critique of the first draft of the section on Belgium, and of the first chapter. Similarly, Livio Maitan, colleague of Mandel in USEC, has been very

helpful in providing material on several countries.

The late Professor Peter Sedgwick of the University of Leeds first sent me extensive information about British Trotskyism, and put me in contact with other students of the movement. Sam Bornstein, Al Richardson, Martin Upham, and John Archer were very helpful in providing information and criticizing the original version of my section on Trotskyism in Great Britain.

Charles van Gelderen provided me considerable material on the British movement, and without him I would have been hard-pressed to have known where to begin to recount the history of Trotskyism in South Africa.

Professor James Jupp aided me in establishing my first contacts with the Trotskyists and ex-Trotskyists in Australia. Also several leaders of the Socialist Workers Party of that country were very kind in providing me with documentary and taped material on the movement there, as was Mick Armstrong of the Independent Socialists.

José Gutierrez Alvarez, a young Trotskyist scholar from Barcelona, was of key aid in helping me to piece together the history of Spanish Trotskyism since the end of the Franco period. He also arranged for me to get important printed material.

Martin Siegel of the Pathfinder Press similarly provided me with documentation from the material collected by the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

Needless to say, none of the people mentioned here, nor any of those listed in the bibliography for that matter, is responsible for anything I say in this volume or for the opinions expressed in it.

Other kinds of debts are owed to other people. My former student, Joshua Landes, first brought to my attention and allowed me to borrow Joseph Nedava's book on *Trotsky and the Jews*. My Rutgers colleague Herbert Rowan was kind enough to translate some material from German.

Finally, mention must be made of my

wife, Joan Alexander. She has borne with endless discussion of Trotskyism for more than five years, even allowing to be diverted from sightseeing in Paris to "hunt down Trotskyites," as she elegantly put it. Also, she put up with endless typing of the various versions of the manuscript, when often she must have thought that my time might have been better spent doing something else. Finally, she made available her great talents in helping to prepare the index of the volume.

Although this is undoubtedly a strange thing to do in the preface to one of one's books, I feel it necessary to recognize here an error which I made in an earlier work, *The Right Opposition: The Lovestoneites and the International Right Opposition of the 1930's*, that on the International Right Opposition of the 1930s. In that volume,

in discussing the Right Opposition in the Netherlands, I mistakenly attributed the origins of the Revolutionary Socialist Labor Party (RSAP) in that country to a right-wing schism in the Dutch Communist Party which had occurred in the early 1930s. My researches on the present volume have resulted in my becoming more fully acquainted with the early Trotskyist background of Henk Sneevliet and the party he organized, which only very late in the day became aligned with the remnants of the International Right Opposition. This story is recounted in the appropriate portion of the present study.

Rutgers University
New Brunswick, N.J.
June 1990



International Trotskyism

1929-1985



Origins and Nature of International Trotskyism

At the beginning of 1929 Leon Trotsky was exiled from the Soviet Union on the orders of his mortal enemy, Joseph Stalin. From then until his murder by an agent of Stalin's GPU eleven and a half years later, Trotsky spent most of his time and energy trying to organize an international political movement in his own image and reflecting his own evolving ideas. For nearly five decades since his death, Trotsky's followers have continued to attempt to set up such an organization. This more than half-century effort is the subject of the present book.

Roots of Trotskyism

International Trotskyism had its roots in the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917, in the first dozen years of the Soviet regime, and most particularly, in the Comintern (CI). In an amorphous form, it existed, therefore, even before Leon Trotsky began his last exile.

Fifty-five years after Karl Marx established the First International (International Workingmen's Association) in London in 1864, and thirty years after Marx's disciples organized the Second (Socialist) International in Paris in 1889, Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin and Leon Trotsky brought into existence the Third International. This organization, formally known as the Communist International, was the first such group to have the ambitious objective of being *the* party of world revolution, an international party with national "sections."

In the years that immediately followed, the new Communist International had a tumultuous existence. It was faced with the problem that the announcement of its establishment had attracted a heterogeneous

group of enthusiasts, including, among others, Second International Socialists who were attracted by the Comintern's apparent intransigent attitude towards compromise with capitalist regimes, pacifists who had opposed their countries' participation in World War I and rejoiced at the Comintern's seeming opposition to war, and anarchosyndicalists who misunderstood entirely the nature of the Russian Bolshevik regime which had given rise to the founding of the Communist International.

For their part, the Russian Bolshevik leaders had a very clear view of the kind of international organization they wanted to create. It was to be an international party governed by the same principles of "democratic centralism" which presumably held sway in the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of the Soviet Union. It would be committed to the forcible seizure of power and the establishment of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (which increasingly became indistinguishable from the dictatorship of the Communist Party).

Hence much of the time and energy of the predominantly Russian leaders of the Communist International during its first years was spent in separating the non-Bolshevik sheep from the tough Bolshevik goats. The Spanish anarchosyndicalists of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo were denied membership; the essentially Social Democratic Norwegian Labor Party was expelled after four years. Other indigestible groups were regurgitated by the Comintern in those first years. At the same time, the purging of those elements within the parties accepted in the Comintern who were not really compatible with Russian Bolshevism was also carried out extensively.

However, this task had not been completed when a grave problem arose within the ranks of the Soviet Communist Party itself, which had repercussions throughout the International. With the onset in 1922 of the fatal illness of Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin, who until then had been the virtually un-

questioned first among equals in the Bolshevik leadership, a bitter and ultimately bloody struggle for succession began. The obvious choice to take Lenin's place was Leon Trotsky. He had been all but universally regarded as being second only to Lenin in the early years of the Soviet state. He had organized and led the Red Army which had won the bloody civil war of 1918-21. He was a brilliant orator and a theorist of genius, both qualities which weighed very heavily in Communist politics in those days.

However, Trotsky lacked the ability for political maneuver and conspiracy of Josip Djugashvili (party name, Joseph Stalin), who in 1922 had seemed to be one of the less important of the top leaders of the revolution. Furthermore, Trotsky had a fatal weakness: he was a late-comer to the Bolshevik ranks, having joined the party only a few months before he led its cohorts in the overthrow of the government of Premier Alexander Kerensky on November 7, 1917. In the years before World War I he had been very critical of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Consequently, in his later career, both in the contest for power in the 1920s and during his lonely exile struggle against Stalin after 1929, he felt compelled to demonstrate that he was a better Bolshevik than those who had been Vladimir Ilyitch's lieutenants in the years before he joined their ranks.

Indeed, Trotsky had provided one of the most insightful analyses and predictions of anyone of the nature and probable result of Lenin's twin theories of "democratic centralism" and "dictatorship of the proletariat." He had foreseen that they would, if successful, lead ultimately to the dictatorship of the party over the proletariat, of the party's Central Committee over the party itself, and ultimately of one man over the Central Committee. This, of course, is exactly what happened under Stalin (and, to some degree at least, under Stalin's successors). It is remarkable that in the years between the outbreak of his struggle against

Stalin and his murder in 1940 Trotsky never brought up his earlier analysis.

Rather, Trotsky sought to fight Stalin on Stalin's (and Lenin's) own ground without challenging the basis of the system. His constant insistence on the Soviet Union's continuing to be a "workers' state"—however "degenerated"—must be seen at least partly in this light. Having accepted the "Bolshevik Leninist" ideas which he had once so clearly denounced, he never felt that the political situation of the moment would permit him to repudiate those ideas and return to the arguments he had made before he became Lenin's partner. Most of his disciples in the more than four decades since his death have not seen fit to do so either.

The Struggle for Power

During the last year and a half of his life, Lenin shared with Trotsky a certain disquiet about the trend of affairs in the Soviet Union, particularly concerning the growing "bureaucratization" of Soviet society and politics. However, Lenin's ill health prevented him from taking very energetic steps to deal with the situation. In the last phase of Lenin's illness, Joseph Stalin, who did not share these worries, had maneuvered to make himself, as Secretary General of the Party, virtually "Lenin's guardian," as Adam Ulam calls him.¹ As a consequence, Trotsky was alone in organizing what came to be the Left Opposition. It had clearly taken form late in 1923, several months before Lenin's death on January 30, 1924.

By the time of Lenin's death an alliance already had been formed within the top leadership of the Soviet Communist Party to block the possibility of Trotsky's becoming Lenin's successor. This was the so-called "First Troika," consisting of Stalin, the Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; Gregory Zinoviev, head of the party in the Petrograd (shortly to be renamed Leningrad) region and head of the Communist International; and Lev Ka-

menev, leader of the party in the Moscow region. Within a year they had succeeded in removing Trotsky from the powerful post of Commissar for War and consigning him to a less dangerous position.

However, as the First Troika became more and more successful in its attacks on Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev began to worry about the growing power and the ruthlessness of their colleague, Joseph Stalin, and in the spring of 1926 they joined with Trotsky to form the Second Troika, or so-called United Opposition. The United Opposition found itself fighting a losing battle. Already removed from all leadership posts, Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the Communist Party in November 1927, and in the following month the same fate befell Kamenev. Subsequently, Trotsky was sent into "internal exile" in Alma Ata, near the Chinese frontier, and finally in January 1929 was expelled from the Soviet Union. Zinoviev and Kamenev, meanwhile, had capitulated to Stalin.²

The final phase of the internal struggle took place in 1928-29, when Stalin turned on his principal ally in the fight against the United Opposition, Nikolai Bukharin, the leader of the so-called Right within the party. Bukharin had succeeded Zinoviev as head of the Comintern and had presided over its Sixth Congress in August 1928. However, he opposed abrupt changes in industrial and agrarian policy forced through by Stalin. He also opposed the exiling of Trotsky to Alma Ata and had even gone to the train to express his regrets to the departing Trotsky.³ By the end of 1929 Bukharin had been totally defeated and had surrendered to Stalin.⁴

Issues as well as personalities were involved in this more than five-year struggle for power, particularly in the controversy between Stalin and Trotsky. The issues centered around both internal policies in the Soviet Union and questions involving the Communist International.

Until he had defeated Trotsky, Stalin

urged the continuation of the New Economic Policy (NEP), the partial reintroduction of the market mechanism in the Soviet economy which had been started in 1921. Trotsky, on the other hand, urged a quick end to the NEP and the substitution of a planned economy for a market-oriented one. During this same period Stalin emphasized that the peasantry was the closest ally of the proletariat (and hence of the Communist Party), whereas Trotsky stressed the potential economic and political dangers to the regime in the continued existence of an independent small landholding peasantry and urged collectivization of agriculture.

Stalin sharply reversed himself on these issues of industrial and agrarian policy once Trotsky had been defeated, thus making his clash with Bukharin inevitable. However, on one issue he never repudiated the position he had taken during his fight with Trotsky. This was his insistence on "Socialism in one country," that is, that it was possible for the Soviet Union to build socialism even if the international revolution were postponed indefinitely. To this idea Trotsky opposed the theory of the Permanent Revolution, which we shall look at shortly.

Two major issues of foreign affairs were also matters of contention in the Soviet power struggle of the 1920s. One was an "alliance" that the Soviet trade unions had formed with the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) in the mid-1920s and which Trotsky, in the face of Stalin's opposition, insisted should be ended after the failure (due to alleged betrayal by the TUC leaders) of the 1926 general strike. The other was the continuation of an alliance of the Comintern and the Chinese Communist Party (which had been worked out when Lenin was still alive) with the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang), even after it became increasingly clear that Chiang Kai-shek, the Kuomintang's principal leader, was strongly anticommunist. Trotsky urged an end to the Kuomintang-Communist alliance, Stalin

insisted on its continuance. In May 1927 Chiang turned on and came close to exterminating the Chinese Communist Party.

Reflections of Soviet Struggle in the Communist International

For the most part the leaders and members of most of the Communist parties outside of the Soviet Union were largely unaware of the issues involved in the dispute within the Soviet Communist Party while it was in progress. However, the Comintern and its member parties were inevitably affected by this conflict.

Leon Trotsky had been one of the principal founders of the Communist International. During the early 1920s he was in charge of its relations with the "Latin" countries, that is, France, Spain and Portugal, Italy, and tangentially, Latin America. In that capacity he got more or less personally involved in a number of the numerous internal controversies which took place within these parties, most of which in that period had nothing to do with what was happening in the Soviet Union.⁵

Also, although most foreign Communist leaders were badly informed about and really not much interested in the internecine struggles in the CPSU until these quarrels were quite advanced, there were a number of foreign Communist leaders who had particularly close personal and political ties with one or another of the faction leaders in the Soviet Party. As the Soviet struggle intensified, the various CPSU factional leaders sought to gain support in foreign parties.

Insofar as Leon Trotsky was concerned there were some what one might call "premature" Trotskyists abroad. Thus Max Eastman, a sympathizer if not member of the Communist Party of the United States and also a good friend of Trotsky, obtained from Trotsky a copy of the so-called Political Testament of Lenin, written during his final illness, in which among other things he urged the Soviet party leadership to remove

Stalin as Secretary General of the CPSU. When Eastman published the document in the United States, Trotsky repudiated it, an action for which Eastman never entirely forgave him.⁶

Another "premature" adherent of Trotsky was Boris Souvarine, a leader of the French Communist Party. He was quite aware of the nature of the struggle in the CPSU and early declared his adherence to Trotsky's cause in that struggle. This won him expulsion from the French party, although he never became part of the separate Trotskyist movement.

There were also Trotsky supporters among the non-Soviet Communists who were part of the apparatus of the Comintern or of organizations with their headquarters in Moscow which were subordinate to the CI, notably the Red International of Labor Unions (RILU). Among these were Alfred Rosmer, who founded the Trotskyist movement in France, and Andrés Nin, who became the first major leader of Spanish Trotskyism.

Gregory Zinoviev also had his personal supporters outside of the Soviet Union. As head of the Comintern he inaugurated a process of so-called "Bolshevization" of the CI parties during the period that he was part of the anti-Trotskyist First Troika. In addition to strengthening the control of Moscow over many parties, this process resulted in the expulsion of pro-Trotsky elements in several countries.

However, with the formation of the United Opposition in the Soviet Union, and the consequent removal of Zinoviev as chairman of the Comintern, the turn came for his supporters in various parties to be expelled. At that point it seemed to many of the Zinovievists that their natural allies were the followers of Trotsky. But many of the Trotskyists were still strongly resentful of the role which Zinoviev and his foreign friends had in expelling them from the Communist movement. This was one of the early problems with which Leon Trotsky had to

deal after his expulsion from the Soviet Union.

A few other non-Soviet Communists were more or less accidentally recruited to Trotsky before his leaving the USSR. Such was the case of James Cannon of the United States and Maurice Spector of Canada, who as delegates to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928 became acquainted with the documents Trotsky had submitted to that session appealing his expulsion from the CPSU and criticizing the Draft Program for the Comintern which had been drawn up by Bukharin and was discussed at the session. They were converted to his point of view and returned home to establish Trotskyist movements in the United States and Canada before they had had any personal contact with Trotsky.

What is Trotskyism?

Once Leon Trotsky was thrown out of the Soviet Union and began the task of trying to organize a "Left Opposition" to the Comintern, he tended to attract the widest range of Communist and ex-Communist opponents of the Stalinist regime. Therefore, one of his major tasks was to try to define exactly the body of ideas around which he was seeking to organize an international movement. This Trotskyist ideology changed considerably in the decade and more in which Trotsky was expounding it, and most of his followers have altered it but little in the nearly five decades since his death.

Max Shachtman, one of the earliest Trotskyites and cofounder of the Trotskyist movement in the United States, wrote long after abandoning Trotskyism that it "as [Trotsky] defined it between 1928 and 1932, particularly . . . was based entirely on three propositions: Opposition to socialism in one country, to the policies of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee, and to the policies of Stalin-Bukharin in the Chinese Revolution ('bloc of four classes,' etc.)." He added that "all these were eventually

'subsumed' in support of the theory and practice of the Permanent Revolution: only the proletariat ('supported by the peasantry')—and the proletariat only insofar as it is led by the Bolshevik revolutionary party—can resolve all the problems of the democratic revolution *in the course of* establishing the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat. . . ."

However, it is clear that Trotskyism as an ideology or body of ideas became considerably more complex and extensive than Max Shachtman indicated. Certainly, the theory of the permanent revolution remained fundamental. But the "theory of uneven and combined development" as an extension and complement of the permanent revolution concept was also a basic element of Trotskyism. The notion of "transitional demands" and the tactic of the united front also became characteristic ideas of Trotskyism.

More problematical was Trotsky's insistence that the Soviet Union remained a "workers' state." He extensively analyzed how the USSR had "degenerated," but continued to defend its bona fides, yet even while he was alive an important group of his followers challenged this position, and after his death this remained a matter of controversy among Trotskyists.

Another basic element of Trotskyism after 1929 was acceptance of Leninism. This involved the concepts of the vanguard party, democratic centralism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. As has already been indicated, this involved a considerable break with Trotsky's own past. Related to Trotsky's acceptance of Leninism is the issue of where he and his followers have stood with regard to political democracy. There is conflicting evidence on this subject.

The Theory of Permanent Revolution

Leon Trotsky expounded the idea of the Permanent Revolution on many occasions. In 1930 he wrote that "the democratic objec-

tives of the backward bourgeois nations lead directly in our epoch to the dictatorship of the proletariat," and that this became an "immediate part of socialist demands."

Trotsky added that "while traditional opinion maintained that the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat passed through a prolonged period of democracy, the theory of the permanent revolution established that in backward countries, the path of democracy passed through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus, the democracy of various decades ceased being a self-sufficient regime and was converted into the immediate prelude of the socialist revolution, united by a continuous connection. Between democratic revolution and a socialist transformation of society, there was therefore established a permanent state of revolutionary development."

Trotsky went on to say that "the second aspect of the theory deals with the socialist revolution as such. During a period of indefinite duration and of constant internal struggle, all social relations are transformed. Society suffers a process of metamorphosis. And in this process of transformation each new stage is a direct consequence of the previous one. . . . The revolution of the economy, technology, science, the family, customs, develop in a complex reciprocal action which doesn't permit society to achieve equilibrium. In this consists the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such."

Finally, the theory of permanent revolution had an international dimension. Concerning this Trotsky said that "internationalism is not an abstract principle but rather a theoretical and political reflection of the world character of the economy, of world development of the productive forces and the world scope of the class struggle. The socialist revolution begins within national frontiers, but it cannot be circumscribed by them. The circumscription of the proletarian revolution within a national territory can be nothing more than a transitory state

of affairs, even though, as demonstrated by the experience of the Soviet Union, it may be prolonged. In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the interior and exterior contradictions inevitably increase with the successes. If it continues isolated, the proletarian State sooner or later must fall victim of these contradictions. Its only way out is in the triumph of the proletariat of the most advanced countries. . . ."⁸

Pierre Frank, one of the principal leaders of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, pointed out that the theory of permanent revolution "is connected with our conception that we live in the epoch of world socialist revolution—and not only in European revolution as had been thought in the 19th Century—and of the transition of capitalism to socialism." He added that "This struggle passés through heights and depressions, victories and defeats."⁹

The Theory of Combined and Uneven Development

Closely linked with the theory of permanent revolution was Leon Trotsky's other theoretical concept, the theory of combined and uneven development. This was originally conceived by him to explain the advent of the first socialist revolution in backward czarist Russia rather than in the advanced countries of Western and Central Europe, as Marx had predicted. It was generalized by Trotsky and his followers to explain social, economic, and political developments in all relatively backward countries. Particularly after his death it was appealed to on various occasions by his followers as an explanation or apology for their policies and actions.

In *The Russian Revolution*, among other places, Trotsky put forward the theory of combined and uneven development in his history of the events of 1917. There, he started his presentation of the theory by saying "a backward country assimilates the material and intellectual conquests of the advanced countries. But this does not mean

that it follows them slavishly, reproduces all stages of their past. The theory of the repetition of historic cycles . . . rests upon an observation of the orbits of old pre-capitalistic cultures, and in part upon the first experiments of capitalist development."

However, capitalism has brought a fundamental change according to Trotsky. He says that "capitalism . . . prepares and in a certain sense realizes the universality and permanence of man's development. By this a repetition of the forms of development by different nations is ruled out. Although compelled to follow after the advanced countries, a backward country does not take things in the same order. The privilege of historic backwardness—and such a privilege exists—permits, or rather compels, the adoption of whatever is ready in advance of any specified date, skipping a whole series of intermediate stages. . . . The possibility of skipping over intermediate steps is of course by no means absolute. Its degree is determined in the long run by the economic and cultural capacities of the country."

But Trotsky argued that the idea of "uneven" development is not a sufficient explanation by itself of the transformation of backward countries. He holds that "the laws of history have nothing in common with a pedantic schematism. Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of *combined development*—by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms."¹⁰

Trotsky applied this theoretical analysis to what happened in Russia between 1905 and 1917. He observed that "the bourgeoisie became economically more powerful. . . .

Impressed by the lessons of 1904, the bourgeoisie had become more conservative and suspicious. The relative weight of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, insignificant before, had fallen still lower. The democratic intelligentsia generally speaking had no firm social support whatever. It could have a transitional political influence, but could play no independent role. . . . In these circumstances, only the youthful proletariat could give the peasantry a program, a banner and leadership. The gigantic tasks thus presented to the proletariat gave rise to an urgent necessity for a special revolutionary organization capable of quickly getting hold of the popular masses and making them ready for revolutionary action under the leadership of the workers. Thus the soviet of 1905 developed gigantically in 1917."

After this historical sketch, Trotsky applied the theory of uneven and combined development to it. He argued "that the soviets . . . are not a mere child of the historic backwardness of Russia, but a product of her combined development, is indicated by the fact that the proletariat of the most industrial country, Germany, at the time of its revolutionary high point—1918 to 1919—could find no other form of organization."¹¹

Trotsky concluded this argument by saying that "the revolution of 1917 had as its immediate task the overthrow of the bureaucratic monarchy, but in distinction from the older bourgeois revolutions, the decisive force now was a new class formed on the basis of a concentrated industry, and armed with new organizations, new methods of struggle. The law of combined development here emerges in its extreme expression: starting with the overthrow of a decayed medieval structure, and revolution in the course of a few months placed the proletariat and the Communist Party in power."¹²

Trotsky and his followers were to use this theory of uneven and combined development as one of their principal theoretical weapons in attacking the Stalinists. Accord-

ing to them, Stalin and his acolytes believed in a "two-stage" process of revolutionary development in less developed countries, that is, first the installation of a "bourgeois democratic" regime, and only then, after a longer or shorter period of bourgeois democratic rule, the ultimate passing over into a socialist revolutionary phase. This argument undoubtedly underlay (together, admittedly, with analysis of actual events) the insistence of Trotsky and his followers that the Stalinists were constantly trying to put a brake on revolutionary progress so that it could pass through its "natural" process from a precapitalist to a bourgeois democratic and finally to a socialist phase.

This line of reasoning faced numerous "contradictions" after World War II when a considerable number of self-professed "socialist" revolutions took place under the leadership of Stalinist or neo-Stalinist parties. As we shall see, different groups of Trotsky's followers reacted to this phenomenon in different ways.

The Theory of Transitional Demands

Another theory or concept which has been characteristic of Trotskyism has been that of "transitional demands." They were expounded upon in the program which Trotsky drew up for the Founding Congress of the Fourth International in September 1938. Formally entitled "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," that document is more popularly referred to as The Transitional Program. In it Trotsky elaborated his concept of transitional demands.

It had long been traditional in the pre-World War I Socialist movement for parties not only to present their long range ("maximum") revolutionary program, but also a more or less long list of "immediate demands" or "minimum program" for social and labor legislation. After the end of the "Third Period" of the Comintern, even the Communist parties tended to present im-

mediate demands in their electoral and other programs. However, Trotsky sought to differentiate "transitional demands" from the traditional "immediate demands."

The Transitional Program declared that "the strategic task of the next period—a pre-revolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard. . . . It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between the present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."¹³

The Transitional Program then made a differentiation between the Fourth International's transitional demands and the traditional immediate demands of the Social Democrats. It argued that "between the minimum and the maximum program no bridge existed. And indeed Social Democracy has no need of such a bridge, since the word *socialism* is used only for holiday speechifying."

In contrast, the Transitional Program argued, "the strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie. However, the achievement of this strategic task is unthinkable without the most considered attention to all, even small and partial questions of tactics. . . . The present epoch is distinguished not for the fact that it frees the revolutionary party from day-to-day work but because it permits this work to be carried on indissolubly with the actual tasks of the revolution."¹⁴

Hence, the Transitional Program pro-

claimed, "the Fourth International does not discard the program of the old 'minimal' demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. . . . But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct, actual, that is, revolutionary perspective. Insofar as the old, partial, 'minimal' demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism . . . the Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very bases of the bourgeois regime. The old 'minimal program' is superseded by the *transitional program*, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution."¹⁵

Trotskyism and the United Front

Another characteristic idea put forward by Leon Trotsky and the international movement which he established has been belief in the "united front." Trotsky first advocated this in the early 1930s when he strongly argued the necessity of an alliance among the German Social Democratic Party, the Communist Party, the opposition Communists, and the trade union movements controlled by the Socialists and Communists, to confront the menace of Nazism. Subsequently in Spain, France and various other countries, he similarly argued that the working-class-based parties and the trade union movements should join forces to confront fascism and right-wing reaction. Of course, the idea of a united front had first been put forward within the CI when Leon Trotsky was one of its principal leaders. However, it was subsequently abandoned by the Comintern during the "Third Period," and became one of the principal tactical positions which characterized Trotskyism.

Leon Trotsky and his followers made a very strong distinction between the United Front and the Popular Front. The former,

which they strongly favored, was a tactical alliance of working-class parties and trade union groups—and thus could include Communists, opposition Communists, Socialists, anarchosyndicalists and trade unions. The Popular Front, which Trotsky and the Trotskyists strongly opposed, was an alliance between working-class parties and middle-class or "bourgeois" parties.

Opposition to the Popular Front became as characteristic a position of Trotskyism as did support of the United Front. The theoretical rationale for this contrasting attitude toward the two different kinds of alliances was that though it might at any given moment be justified for working-class organizations to join forces against common foes, the working class should always maintain its own independence as a class. Therefore it was absolutely wrong for working-class parties to join forces with elements of the "class enemy" to establish popular fronts.

Disputes over popular fronts not only remained a matter of contention between Trotskyism and Stalinism, they also became on various occasions a subject of factional controversy within the ranks of International Trotskyism. At various times and in various places Trotskyist groups *did* form alliances with other political elements. Not infrequently other Trotskyist groups interpreted these alliances (which the elements forming them regarded as united fronts) as being popular fronts. Few charges were more condemnatory than that of a Trotskyist group being a participant in a popular front.

Trotsky's Defence of the USSR as a Workers State

Another theoretical argument which generally characterized Trotsky's political position was his insistence that the Soviet Union continued to be a "workers' state." However, during and after Trotsky's life there was by no means unanimous agreement among his followers with this position.

One of the publications in which Trotsky most extensively explored this issue was his book *The Revolution Betrayed*. There, after recognizing the emergence in the USSR of a new "bureaucratic caste" under Stalin's leadership, Trotsky tended to deal with the issue of the role of that bureaucracy in Soviet society only in terms of distribution.

Trotsky clearly recognized the unequal distribution of the social product in favor of the bureaucracy. He said that "from the point of view of property in the means of production, the differences between a Marshal and a servant girl, the head of a trust and a day laborer, the son of a people's commissar and a homeless child, seem not to exist at all. Nevertheless, the former occupy lordly apartments, enjoy several summer homes in various parts of the country, have the best automobiles at their disposal, and have long ago forgotten how to shine their own shoes. The latter live in wooden barracks often without partitions, lead a half-hungry existence, and do not shine their own shoes only because they go barefoot. To the bureaucrat, this difference does not seem worthy of attention. To the day laborer, however, it seems, not without reason, very essential."¹⁶

Trotsky did not carry the argument further, to the question of the rights of ownership of formally "state" property. He says, in dealing with the question "Is the Bureaucracy a Ruling Class?" that "classes are characterized by their position in the social system of the economy, and primarily by their relation to the means of production. In civilized societies, property relations are validated by laws. The nationalization of the land, the means of industrial production, transport and exchange, together with the monopoly of foreign trade, constitute the basis of the Soviet social structure. Through these relations, established by the proletarian revolution, the nature of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state is for us basically defined."¹⁷

Trotsky realized that from the point of

view of the worker, this might not seem to be a "proletarian state." He noted:

The transfer of the factories to the state changed the situation of the worker only juridically. In reality, he is compelled to live in want and work a definite number of hours for a definite wage. Those hopes which the worker formerly had placed in the party and the trade unions, he transferred after the revolution to the state created by him. But the useful functioning of this implement turned out to be limited by the level of technique and culture. In order to raise this level, the new state resorted to the old methods of pressure upon the muscles and nerves of the worker. There grew up a corps of slave drivers. The management of industry became superbureaucratic. The workers lost all influence whatever upon the management of the factory. With piecework payment, hard conditions of material existence, lack of free movement, with terrible police repression penetrating the life of every factory, it is hard indeed for the worker to feel himself a "free workman." In the bureaucracy he sees the manager, in the state, the employer. Free labor is incompatible with the existence of a bureaucratic state.¹⁸

However, Trotsky saw only two possible ways for the Soviet system to go: forward to socialism and communism (which the Stalinist bureaucracy was hampering), or backward to a "capitalist restoration." Thus, "two opposite tendencies are growing up out of the depth of the Soviet regime. To the extent that, in contrast to a decaying capitalism, it develops the productive forces, it is preparing the economic basis of socialism. To the extent that, for the benefit of an upper stratum, it carries to more and more extreme expression bourgeois norms of distribution, it is preparing a capitalist restoration. This contrast between forms of property and norms of distribution cannot grow indefinitely. Either the bourgeois

norm must in one form or another spread to the means of production, or the norms of distribution must be brought into correspondence with the socialist property system. . . ."¹⁹

Trotsky did not see the possibility of the rise of a new ruling class. He ruled out the possibility of "state capitalism." He says that "the term 'state capitalism' originally arose to designate all the phenomena which arise when a bourgeois state takes direct charge of the means of transport or of industrial enterprises. The very necessity of such measures is one of the signs that the productive forces have outgrown capitalism and are bringing it to a partial self-negation in practice. But the outworn system along with its elements of self-negation, continues to exist as a capitalist system."²⁰ He adds that "the first concentration of the means of production in the hands of the state to occur in history was achieved by the proletariat with the methods of social revolution, and not by capitalists with the method of state trustification. Our brief analysis is sufficient to show how absurd are the attempts to identify capitalist state-ism with the Soviet system. The former is reactionary, the latter progressive."²¹

He rejected the idea that the Soviet bureaucracy was a new "ruling class."

In its intermediary and regulating function, its concern to maintain social ranks, and its exploitation of the state apparatus for personal goals, the Soviet bureaucracy is similar to every other bureaucracy, especially the fascist. But it is also in a vast way different. In no other regime has a bureaucracy ever achieved such a degree of independence from the dominating class. . . . The Soviet bureaucracy has risen above a class which is hardly emerging from destitution and darkness and has no tradition of dominion or command. . . . the Soviet bureaucracy takes on bourgeois customs without having beside it a national bourgeoisie. In this sense, we can-

not deny that it is something more than a bureaucracy. It is in the full sense of the word, the sole privileged and commanding stratum in the Soviet society."²²

Further,

The Soviet bureaucracy has expropriated the proletariat politically in order by methods of *its own* to defend the social conquests. But the very fact of its appropriation of political power in a country where the principal means of production are in the hands of the state, creates a new and hitherto unknown relation between the Bureaucracy and the riches of the nation. The means of production belong to the state. But the state, so to speak, "belongs" to the bureaucracy. . . . If these as yet wholly new relations should solidify, become the norm and be legalized, whether with or without resistance from the workers, they would, in the long run, lead to a complete liquidation of the social conquests of the proletarian revolution. But to speak of that now is at least premature."²³

The only way Trotsky foresaw this "liquidation" happening was by members of the bureaucracy receiving individual titles of ownership in the means of production and distribution. He says that "the bureaucracy has neither stocks nor bonds. It is recruited, supplemented and renewed in the manner of an administrative hierarchy, independently of any special property relations of its own. The individual bureaucrat cannot transmit to his heirs his rights in the exploitation of the state apparatus. The bureaucracy enjoys its privileges under the form of an abuse of power. Its appropriation of a vast share of the national income has the character of social parasitism. All this makes the position of the commanding Soviet stratum in the highest degree contradictory, equivocal and undignified, notwithstanding the completeness of its power and the smokescreen of flattery that conceals it."²⁴

Trotsky summed up his argument thus: "The October revolution has been betrayed by the ruling stratum, but not yet overthrown. It has a great power of resistance, coinciding with the established property relations, with the living force of the proletariat, the consciousness of its best elements, the impasse of world capitalism, and the inevitability of world revolution."²⁵

One can only speculate as to whether Trotsky would have continued to maintain the "workers' state" argument after World War II. An article he wrote soon after outbreak of the war offers at least some doubt that he would have done so. He starts his discussion of the impact of the war on the Soviet Union by saying that "if this war provokes, as we firmly believe, the proletarian revolution, it will inevitably lead to the fall of the bureaucracy in the USSR, and the regeneration of Soviet democracy, on an economic and cultural basis much higher than that of 1918. In this case, the question of whether the Stalinist bureaucracy is a 'class' or an excrescence in a Workers State, will be resolved by itself. To all and to every one it will be clear that in the course of the development of the international revolution, the Soviet bureaucracy will not have been more than an episode."

However, Trotsky admits that if his optimism concerning general world revolution including the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy being a consequence of the war proved unjustified, the issue of the nature of the Soviet Union would be quite different.

The historical alternative is the following: either the Stalinist regime is a repugnant accident in the process of the transformation of the capitalist society into a socialist society, or the Stalinist regime is the first stage of a new exploitative society. If the second prediction proves to be correct, the bureaucracy will be converted, naturally, into a new exploiting class. Hard as this second perspective is, if the world proletariat really proves inca-

pable of carrying out the mission which events have placed upon it, we would have no alternative but to recognize that the socialist program, based on the internal contradictions of capitalist society, was a Utopia. There would be necessary, naturally, a new "minimum" program—for the defense of the interests of the slaves of the totalitarian bureaucratic society.²⁶

Perhaps some indication of how Leon Trotsky might have felt about the workers state status of the USSR is given by the fact that his widow, Natalia Sedova, changed her mind on the subject. In her letter of resignation from the Fourth International in 1951 she said that "obsessed by old and used-up formulas, you continue considering the Stalinist state as a Workers State. I cannot and don't wish to follow you in this. . . ."²⁷

International Trotskyism and the Workers State Issue After Trotsky

After World War II, Leon Trotsky's more orthodox followers reaffirmed their loyalty to the idea that the Soviet Union was a workers' state. In addition they extended the concept to cover all other countries in which Communist parties were in power. Of course, Trotsky in the 1930s categorized the Stalinist regime as a "degenerated" workers' state. His more orthodox followers after his death continued to use this designation, extending it to other Communist regimes which had come to power without having been put there by the Soviet Army. For Stalinist regimes installed in Eastern European countries after conquest by the Red Army, most of the Trotskyists used the term "deformed workers' states."

One of the major sources of controversy among more orthodox Trotskyists after 1959 was how to categorize the Castro regime in Cuba. The Socialist Workers Party of the United States early reached the conclusion that it was a workers' state—with-

out any qualifying adjective. This description was ultimately accepted by the United Secretariat faction of International Trotskyism. Other more or less orthodox groups for long refused to accept the Castro regime as a workers' state at all, and when they finally did so tended to regard it also as "deformed."

Even before Trotsky's death there developed a faction within International Trotskyism which disagreed with Trotsky on his continued insistence on the Soviet Union's being a workers state. The last great polemic in which Trotsky engaged was with the faction of the Socialist Workers Party led by Max Shachtman, James Burnham and Martin Abern, which denied that the USSR could any longer be regarded as a workers state. Although the "Shachtmanite" split in 1940 in the SWP did not then result in the establishment of an organized tendency within International Trotskyism outside of the United States which rejected the workers state designation for Communist Party regimes, such a development did take place in the 1960s. The International Socialist faction within organizations in the United States, Great Britain, Portugal, and Australia, and individual supporters in various other countries, took its place as a recognized element within International Trotskyism. However, although there was agreement among the International Socialist group that Communist Party controlled regimes could not be regarded as workers states, there was considerable disagreement among them concerning exactly how to define and categorize those societies.

Trotskyism and Leninism

The theory of permanent revolution, the theory of combined and uneven development, the concept of transitional demands, advocacy of the united front, and even the concept of the Soviet Union as a "degenerated workers state" were original ideas put forward by Leon Trotsky. One other element in the ideology which has character-

ized International Trotskyism since its inception in 1929 did not originate with Trotsky. This was the body of ideas which fall within the definition of Leninism.

Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin in his more than quarter of a century of political activity took many positions on many things. The elements of Lenin's thinking which Trotsky and his followers particularly emphasized that they had accepted, however, were his concepts of a vanguard party, democratic centralism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin's ideas concerning the need for an elitist revolutionary party were first put forward, he originally emphasized, in response to the oppressive conditions existing in czarist Russia at the turn of the twentieth century. He later converted them into a general rule, and it became an inherent part of the ideology which distinguished the Bolsheviks and later the Communist movement.

It was in the pamphlet *What Is To Be Done!* (1902) that Lenin first elaborated the key features of his theory of a vanguard party. He argued that "without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. . . . The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory. . . ."28

Further, "we have said that there could not yet be Social Democratic consciousness among the workers. It could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc. The theory of Socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals."²⁹

From this analysis Lenin concluded that "class political consciousness can be

brought to the workers only from without. . . . He also argued as a result that "the organizations of revolutionaries must consist, first, foremost and mainly of people who make revolutionary activity their profession. . . . In view of this common feature of the members of such an organization, all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals, and certainly distinctions of trade and profession, must be utterly obliterated."³⁰

Subsequently Lenin added the concept of "democratic centralism" to that of the vanguard party. In 1906 he wrote that "criticism within the limits of the foundations of the party program must be completely free . . . not only at party meetings, but also at broader ones. To suppress such criticism or such 'agitation' (for criticism cannot be separated from agitation) is impossible. The political action of the party must be united. No 'appeals' are permissible which violate the unity of actions which have already been decided upon, neither at open meetings, nor at party meetings, nor in the party press. . . . The principle of democratic centralism and autonomy of local institutions means specifically freedom of criticism, complete and everywhere, as long as this does not disrupt the unity of action already decided upon—and the intolerability of any criticism undermining or obstructing the unity of action decided on by the party."³¹

It was exactly Lenin's ideas about the nature of a revolutionary party which Trotsky had long opposed and vigorously criticized in the years before he joined the Bolshevik Party. In his most famous critique of these ideas, in *Our Political Tasks* (1904), he had written that "we wish that our comrades would not overlook the difference of principle between the two methods of work. . . . This difference, if we reduce it to its basis of principle, has decisive significance in determining the character of all the work of our party. In the one case we have the contriving of ideas for the proletariat, the *political substitution* for the proletariat, in the other, *political education* of the proletariat, its political mobilization."

Trotsky adds that "the system of political substitution proceeds—consciously or unconsciously—from a false 'sophisticated' understanding of the relations between the objective interests of the proletariat and its consciousness . . ." As a consequence, "in the internal politics of the party these methods lead . . . to this: the party is replaced by the organization of the party, the organization by the Central Committee, and finally the Central Committee by the dictator."³²

As a consequence of the development of this kind of party Trotsky argued that "the dictatorship of the proletariat" would be replaced by "the dictatorship over the proletariat." Trotsky added that "under Jacobin-Bolshevik tactics, the whole international proletarian movement would be accused of moderatism before the revolutionary tribunal, and the lion head of Marx would be the first to fall under the knife of the guillotine."³³

However, on entering the Bolshevik Party in August 1917, Leon Trotsky accepted Lenin's ideas about the nature of the revolutionary party. After Trotsky's exile from the Soviet Union he continued to protest loyalty to those Leninist notions, and both Trotsky and his followers continued to insist upon their bona fides as Leninists. Indeed, one of the most frequently used titles for their parties and groups has been "Bolshevik-Leninists." Generally they have tended to argue that they, and not the Stalinists, are the genuine heirs of Lenin.

The nature of "democratic centralism" has been a frequent subject of controversy during the innumerable factional struggles which have characterized International Trotskyism. Losing factions in such contests have almost always accused their opponents of having "violated the principles of democratic centralism."

Trotskyism and Political Democracy

The last issue to note in defining Trotskyism as a distinctive ideology or tendency in international politics centers on the Trots-

kyists' position with regard to political democracy. There is conflicting evidence on this question.

Since the establishment of International Trotskyism as an identifiable movement, members of that movement have never come to power in any country. As a result, there is no basis for judgment in terms of their behavior as a ruling party as to their belief in and practice of democracy. There is certain evidence from the period during which Leon Trotsky himself was one of the principal leaders of the Soviet revolutionary government. There are also writings of Trotsky and his supporters on the subject. Finally, there is evidence concerning which regimes the Trotskyists support more or less grudgingly.

Trotsky and Lenin shared the top leadership of the Soviet regime from November 1917 until at least mid-1922. During that period not only was the constituent assembly which had been elected three weeks after the Bolshevik seizure of power on November 7, 1917, dissolved by the Bolshevik regime in January 1918, but all other parties except the Communist Party were officially suppressed, and the existence of factions within the Communist Party itself was outlawed.

So long as Trotsky and his supporters remained (in their own eyes at least) the "Left Opposition" to the Communist International, they did not question any of these actions and policies. Once Trotsky, after the victory of the Nazis in Germany, called first for a rival Communist Party of Germany, then for a dual Soviet Communist Party, and finally for a Fourth International to compete with the Comintern and its national "sections," he and his followers began to question the monopoly of power in the Soviet Union by the Communist Party and the idea of a single "vanguard" party in revolutionary regimes.

Leon Trotsky dealt with this issue at some length in his book *The Revolution Betrayed*. There he portrayed both the outlawing of opposition parties in the Soviet Union and

of factions within the Bolshevik Party as "temporary" aberrations made necessary by the Civil War and its aftermath. He wrote that "democracy had been narrowed in proportion as difficulties increased. In the beginning, the party had wished and hoped to preserve freedom of political struggle within the framework of the Soviets. The civil war introduced stern amendments into this calculation. The opposition parties were forbidden one after the other. This measure, obviously in conflict with the spirit of Soviet democracy, the leaders of Bolshevism regarded not as a principle, but as an episodic act of self-defense."

Trotsky also presented an apologia for the abolition of factions within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. "In March 1921," he says, "in the days of the Kronstadt revolt, which attracted into its ranks no small number of Bolsheviks, the tenth congress of the party thought it necessary to resort to a prohibition of factions—that is, to transfer the political regime prevailing in the state to the inner life of the ruling party. This forbidding of factions was again regarded as an exceptional measure to be abandoned at the first serious improvement in the situation. At the same time, the Central Committee was extremely cautious in applying the new law, concerning itself most of all lest it lead to a strangling of the inner life of the party."³⁴

By the time he wrote *The Revolution Betrayed*, however, Trotsky was advocating the establishment of a rival to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. With regard to this, he explained:

It is not a question of substituting one ruling clique for another, but of changing the very methods of administering the economy and guiding the culture of the country. Bureaucratic autocracy must give place to Soviet democracy. A restoration of the right of criticism, and a genuine freedom of elections, are necessary conditions for the further development of the country. This assumes a revival of freedom of Soviet parties, beginning with

the party of Bolsheviks, and a resurrection of the trade unions. The bringing of democracy into industry means a radical revision of plans in the interests of the toilers. Free discussion of economic problems will decrease the overhead expense of bureaucratic mistakes and zigzags.³⁵

In his discussion of the newly introduced Stalinist constitution of the USSR, Trotsky also discussed the issue of democracy. He argued that under the new constitution "the Soviet people will have the right to choose their 'representatives' only from among candidates whom the central and local leaders present to them under the flag of the party. To be sure, during the first period of the Soviet era the Bolshevik party also exercised a monopoly. But to identify these two phenomena would be to take appearance for reality. The prohibition of opposition parties was a temporary measure dictated by conditions of civil war, blockade, intervention and famine. The ruling party, representing in that period a genuine organization of the proletarian vanguard, was living a full-blooded inner life. A struggle of groups and factions to a certain degree replaced the struggle of parties. . . . The prohibition of other parties, from being a temporary evil, has been erected into a principle."³⁶

After Trotsky's death his followers continued to argue in favor of the existence of more than one party in the Communist Party-controlled states. However, there still remained grounds to question to what degree they favored a multiparty kind of regime with the full panoply of civil liberties—free press, free speech, competing political parties and the right of the citizens to petition for the redress of grievances.

One aspect of the question was the persistence of the policy of the Trotskyist parties and groups (of virtually all of the competing factions) of giving "critical support" to all Communist Party-dominated regimes. Although frequently criticizing such governments and even urging, as Trotsky had done,

"political revolutions" in some of them, virtually all Trotskyist parties or groups have maintained Trotsky's traditional position of pledging "unqualified support" to those regimes against all non-Communist governments or non-Trotskyist internal factions.

Another question involved in any discussion of the position of Trotsky and his followers with regard to political democracy is the continued verbal commitment of virtually all elements of the movement to the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Isaac Deutscher, the biographer of and apologist for Trotsky, has summarized Trotsky's thinking on this subject, noting that Trotsky "was in favor of the proletarian dictatorship because he considered it axiomatic that the landlords, capitalists and slave owners would not generally give up their properties and their power without a savage struggle. Only a dictatorship could save the Russian Revolution. But what would be its character?"

Deutscher goes on to answer this question by saying that "in Trotsky's concept, the proletarian dictatorship was, or should have been, a proletarian democracy. This did not constitute a paradox. One must not forget that Trotsky, like other Marxists, was accustomed to describing all bourgeois democracies . . . as 'bourgeois dictatorships.' He knew, certainly, that in strictly political and constitutional terms, these regimes were not dictatorial or even semi-dictatorial, and he was quite aware of the liberties the people enjoyed in parliamentary democracies."³⁷

Deutscher continues: "But Trotsky insisted on describing the western parliamentary system as a bourgeois dictatorship in the broadest sense, as a regime in which, since it was based on capitalist property, guaranteed to the possessing classes economic and social supremacy, and thus political and cultural supremacy. . . . Similar to the bourgeois 'dictatorship,' the proletarian one could be, from the political point of view, dictatorial, democratic, could take different constitutional forms. . . ."³⁸

Most of the contending factions of the international Trotskyist movement continued more or less to follow positions with regard to political democracy which he elaborated in *The Revolution Betrayed* and thereafter. Perhaps the most complete statement of the movement's position was a long resolution, "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," adopted in principle in 1979 by the Eleventh World Congress of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USEC), the largest of the organized tendencies within International Trotskyism.

That document started by proclaiming:

Revolutionary Marxists understand that the working class can only exercise State power in state institutions of a different type from that of the bourgeois State, that is, institutions founded on workers councils (soviets), sovereign and democratically elected and centralized with their fundamental characteristics being those that Lenin set forth in *State and Revolution*: election of all functionaries, judges, directors of workers' (or workers' and peasants') militia and of all delegates representing workers in State institutions; regular rotation of those elected; limitation of their incomes to those of a skilled worker; revocability of all those elected at the wish of their electors; joint exercise of legislative and executive powers by the institutions of the soviet type; radical reduction of the number of permanent functionaries and growing transfer of administrative function or organs directly made up of workers.³⁹

Pierre Frank, one of the principal leaders of USEC, has expanded upon the Trotskyists' concept of the soviets:

we are in favor of representation on the basis of "councils" (soviets etc.) because we think that they are more representative of direct democracy than parliamentary representation renewable only after a

given period of time. Such representation however doesn't exclude regional representation by assemblies of councils on a local, regional and national level. Insofar as the possibility of coexistence between representation by councils and parliamentary representation, that has never been debated in our ranks. But many of us consider that it will not necessarily always be incompatible, that it is a question which depends on the circumstances, understanding of course that it will be a State in which the capitalist regime has been overthrown. . . . if we are intransigent concerning the objective of revolutionary struggles of our epoch, on the strategy and tactics to use, we are in contrast extremely flexible in terms of organization at all levels; we are not prisoners of any rigid formula, and certainly not tied to the measures taken in the Soviet Union during the first years of the revolution or the imperious necessities of the civil war which imposed draconian methods, which however, were never the subject of theorizing by Lenin while he lived.⁴⁰

Ernest Mandel, another leading figure in USEC, has also explained the reason for the continued Trotskyist commitment to the soviet form of organization of the post-revolutionary state. He traces it to "our commitment (which continues that of Trotsky) to the idea of *proletarian* revolution, i.e. the working class (more specifically the industrial working class) seen as the only potential social force capable of bringing about a classless socialist society, and this in function of its specific social (social-economic) characteristics inside capitalist society. This is in direct heritage from Marx and Engels themselves, and parallel to similar concepts developed by Rosa Luxemburg and Gramsci. That's why Trotsky—who is the author of that concept—stuck during his whole life to the idea of self-organization of the working class, and the idea of workers

councils [‘soviet’] power which derives therefrom. The [Fourth International] has remained faithful to the same idea, which is probably our most distinctive programmatic conquest.”⁴¹

Recognizing that the socialization of all means of production and the substitution of planning for the market would constantly involve decisions about resource allocation, the USEC 1979 document states that for this purpose, “fundamentally, there are only two mechanisms . . . either bureaucratic choices imposed on the mass of workers/consumers from on high . . . or choices made by the mass of the producers themselves, through the mechanism of democratically centralized workers’ power, that is to say, through socialist democracy. These will constitute the principal subject of political debates and struggles of the socialist democracy, under the dictatorship of the proletariat.”⁴²

The United Secretariat document strongly advocated a multiparty system in the postrevolutionary period. It argued that “without total liberty to organize political groups, tendencies and parties, there will not exist the full and entire democratic rights and liberties of the laboring masses under the dictatorship of the proletariat. By their free vote, the workers and poor peasants will themselves indicate which parties they desire to make part of the soviet system.”⁴³

The document even argued that parties with reformist and bourgeois ideologies should be free to contest soviet elections. It asks, “If one says that only parties and organizations that are not of bourgeois [or petty bourgeois?] program or ideology, or those which are not ‘engaged in antisocialist or antisoviet propaganda and/or agitation’ may be legalized, where will the line of demarcation be drawn? Will parties having a majority of members from the working class but at the same time with a bourgeois ideology, be banned? How can one square such a position with the concept of free election of the councils of workers? What is the line of

demarcation between the ‘bourgeois program’ and the ‘reformist’ ideology? Will the reformist parties also be banned? Will social democracy be suppressed?”⁴⁴

A bit later the document sums up the argument on a multiparty system: “This signifies that freedom of political organization must be accorded all those, including probourgeois elements, who in fact respect the Constitution of the Workers’ State, that is, who are not engaged in violent actions to overturn the power of the workers and collective property in the means of production.”⁴⁵

On the other hand, the USEC resolution is also committed to the idea of a vanguard party: “The lack of homogeneity in the working class, the unequal development of class consciousness in different groups, the discontinuity in social and political activity of many of its components, make indispensable the separate organization of the most conscious and continually active elements of the working class in a vanguard revolutionary party. That is true with regard to the requirements of the class struggle under capitalism. That also applies to the exigencies of the conquest of power and the progress of the proletariat on the way to socialism.”⁴⁶

But the power of the vanguard party is not unlimited. The 1979 document argues:

To avoid all abuse of power by the vanguard party exercising the directing role in the working class under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the IV International will struggle for the following principles: a) the widest internal democracy in the party itself, with full and entire right to organize tendencies and tolerance of fractions and possibility of public debates among them before the congress of the party; b) the widest links and interpenetration between the party and the working class itself. A revolutionary vanguard workers party can efficaciously direct the working class under the dicta-

torship of the proletariat only if simultaneously it enjoys the political confidence of the majority of the workers and gains the accession to its ranks of the great majority of the vanguard workers.

The document went on with the list of limitations on the vanguard party:

c) strict suppression of all material privileges of the cadres and leaders of the party . . . d) no political or ideological monopoly of the vanguard party over political or cultural activities. Defense of the multiparty principle. e) complete separation of the apparatus of the party from that of the state; f) integration of the party in a revolutionary international and acceptance of fraternal international criticism from revolutionary organizations of other countries. No control of the International by the party or parties in control in one or several Workers States.⁴⁷

Pierre Frank summed up the Trotskyists' "vanguard party" idea thus: "We are a revolutionary Marxist party, of the vanguard, without reformists or centrists, based on democratic centralism. That has nothing to do with the caricature made of it by the Stalinists, it is neither a barracks nor a hierarchized Church. Its members do not all have to be professional revolutionaries."

Frank added that "we are for a world party, a revolutionary International based on democratic centralism. International democratic centralism is not exactly identical with democratic centralism on the national level, since the tasks are different for an International and its national sections."⁴⁸

The position on political democracy adopted by the United Secretariat in 1979 clearly did not represent the point of view of all those claiming allegiance to Trotskyism. The more or less official critique of that position by the Morenoist tendency was put forward by Darioush Karim during the internal discussion of the 1979 document within USEC, at a time when the Morenoists were

still the Bolshevik Tendency of the Secretariat. It was published in November 1982 by the Internationalist Workers' Party (Fourth International), the Morenoist group in the United States.

Karim took issue with many things in the USEC resolution. His two most significant objections were to the draft resolution's endorsement of "unfettered political freedom," and its endorsement of full freedom to organize political parties in the postrevolutionary regime.

Concerning the issue of unfettered political freedom, Karim wrote that "it is our position that neither the systematic repression of all opposition by the Stalinist bureaucracy nor the democratist 'unfettered political freedom' of the us majority are correct since 'we do not make a fetish of democratic forms. The protection of the dictatorship overrides all other considerations' (Trotsky, 1929). . . . The proletariat by means of a revolutionary mobilization and led by the Marxist party, will use whatever means at its disposal to smash the counterrevolution and deepen the revolution without committing itself to any prescribed norms. At any given moment it ought to be able to decide in the light of the prevailing conditions and necessities, which freedoms it is prepared to concede and which it will withdraw. In other words, there will be 'limited political freedom' in accordance with the requirements of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . Only the revolutionary masses headed by the Trotskyist party can determine the course of action to be taken in terms of the situation at the time, and there is no written norm or thesis which can prescribe action *a priori*."⁴⁹

The Morenoist writer also objected to the absolute endorsement of a pluri-party system after the revolution. "The multiparty soviet is a relative norm, not an absolute one. In certain cases, a multiparty soviet can become a one-party soviet through a dialectical process. Revolutionary soviets will have the right to determine which parties to

recognize, perhaps only one, two, or three at any given time. The criterion must be whether the practice of these parties is revolutionary or counter-revolutionary. On principle, we are only obliged to recognize revolutionary, not counterrevolutionary parties. This is the true Trotskyist concept."⁵⁰

It is clear that the broad endorsement of the elementary principles of political democracy given by USEC in 1979 does not have the support all tendencies within International Trotskyism.

The Splintering of International Trotskyism

During the first four years of Trotsky's efforts after 1929 to organize an international movement he and his followers regarded themselves as an "opposition" faction of the Communist International which was for reasons beyond its control temporarily outside of the formal ranks of the CI. After the collapse of the German Communist Party in the face of the Nazis in 1933, Trotsky and his supporters declared their objective to be the establishment of a Fourth International (FI). In September 1938 at a conference held outside of Paris, that Fourth International was formally declared to exist.

Even in the period before the formal establishment of the FI there was a great deal of factionalism within the various national groups adhering to Trotsky's movement. Also, as a reflection of Trotsky's own frequent involvement in these internal struggles, there developed what might be called "anti-Trotsky" elements within the movement. In the 1930s there were two tiny international groups established to challenge his leadership of the Left Opposition. Neither of these long survived World War II.

Most of these factional fights were over tactics rather than basic theoretical concepts. However, in 1939-40 there took place the first major struggle over ideology—specifically over the categorization of the Soviet Union as a "workers state." Although

this conflict was largely confined to the Socialist Workers Party of the United States and did not immediately result in a rival to the Fourth International, two decades later, as we have already noted, a faction, the International Socialists, did develop around the ideas which the "Shachtmanite" dissidents of 1939-40 had advocated.

Although it was hard to maintain contact among the member groups of the Fourth International during World War II, an International Conference took place in 1946, and the Second Congress of the International met two years later. A Third Congress met in 1951, the last meeting of a united Fourth International.

During 1952-53 a major split took place in the Fourth International that was never completely healed. It resulted in the emergence of two groups, the International Secretariat (IS), headed by Michel Pablo (Raptis), who had been Secretary of the International since 1946, and the International Committee (IC), centering on the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, and the largest factions of the French and British movements.

After extensive negotiations an attempt was made to reunite the International Secretariat and the International Committee. A "unity congress," which was held in 1963, brought together most of the parties associated with the IS, and the Socialist Workers Party and a few other groups from the IC, and resulted in the establishment of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USEC).

Full unity was not restored to International Trotskyism, however. Most of the Latin American affiliates of the International Secretariat withdrew from the IS and established their own version of the Fourth International under the leadership of the Argentine, J. Posadas. Remnants of that schismatic group even survived Posadas' death in 1981.

On the other side, the French and British sections of the International Committee

continued their own version of the IC, but in 1966 an element of the IC broke away. This was the Spartacist League of the United States, which in the 1970s developed its own international faction, which took the somewhat idiosyncratic name international Spartacist tendency (*sic*).

In 1971-72 the rump International Committee further split into two groups. The British party, headed by Gerry Healy, continued its own version of the IC, while the IC's French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, headed by Pierre Lambert, set up yet another international group, the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, widely known by its French initials—CORQI.

This did not end the process of splintering of International Trotskyism. Both the United Secretariat and Healyites, as well as the CORQI suffered splits. Although Michel Pablo and his immediate supporters had participated in establishing USEC, they broke away two years later and established another group, the International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency.

Then in 1979 most of the Latin American affiliates of USEC again broke away from that organization under the leadership of another Argentine, Nahuel Moreno. After a couple years of negotiations aimed at the merger of the Moreno group and CORQI those efforts failed, and the Moreno faction established their own International Workers League [Fourth International].

The Healyite International Committee also suffered a split in the mid-1970s. After the British Workers Revolutionary Party expelled its principal trade union leader, Alan Thornett, and his followers, the Thornett faction joined with groups in several other countries to establish the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee. Then in 1985 the Healyites suffered still another division when their central group, that of Britain, was torn into two different organizations.

Meanwhile, a small faction had also broken away from CORQI. It centered on a group

of East European exiles, led by a Hungarian, Michel Varga, who had worked very closely with the French OCI. The Varga group had small affiliates in Spain, the United States and a handful of other countries. It called itself simply the Fourth International.

There was one other current in International Trotskyism which had never been part of the Fourth International. This was a small group of parties centering on the Lutte Ouvrière of France. Lutte Ouvrière had originated as a split from the French Trotskyist party in the late 1930s, which at that time opposed establishment of the Fourth International. Although it never joined the FI, it considered itself part of the International Trotskyist movement, and was the center of a group of parties which included organizations in the French Antilles and the United States.

Finally, there were some national organizations which considered themselves Trotskyist but by the 1980s had no international affiliation. These included the Militant Group in Great Britain and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Sri Lanka.

Alignment of the Various Tendencies of International Trotskyism

All of the international groups which we have mentioned had their origins in the Fourth International or one of its parties. Some of them remained more or less "orthodox," adhering basically to the ideas which Trotsky had put forward. Others moved more or less drastically away from Trotskyist principles as we have outlined them.

The groups which can be regarded as more or less "orthodox" are the United Secretariat, the International Workers League (Fourth International), the Thornett faction, CORQI, the Varga Fourth International and the Lutte Ouvrière faction. The other groups have more or less drastically drifted away from orthodox Trotskyism.

By the mid-1970s Michel Pablo and his followers had ceased to call themselves

Some General Characteristics of International Trotskyism

Trotskyists although they still considered themselves revolutionary Marxists. In contrast, the International Socialist tendency considered itself Trotskyist, although it basically disagreed with Trotsky's labelling of the USSR as a workers state or the application to other Communist Party regimes of that definition.

Other groups moved much further from traditional Trotskyism. The International Committee, led by Gerry Healy, concentrated from the mid-1970s on violent attacks on Socialist Workers Party (U.S.) leaders as having been agents of the GPU and FBI and developed close relations with the regime of Colonel Qaddafi, dictator of Libya.

The international Spartacist tendency in the early 1980s took a pro-Stalinist stand. It supported the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—the only element in International Trotskyism to do so—and violently attacked the Solidarity movement in Poland, which other Trotskyist factions regarded as the kind of "political revolution" they had always advocated.

The Posadas version of the Fourth International from its inception adopted the idiosyncratic ideas put forth by its leader. These included the belief that out of nuclear war, which Posadas argued was inevitable, would come the world revolution; a tendency to baptize many different regimes in Africa and Asia as "workers states"; and an extremely exaggerated belief in its own power, and in the influence of Posadas' ideas in the Communist Party-controlled countries.

Before undertaking a country-by-country and faction-by-faction analysis of International Trotskyism, a few general observations on the movement are in order. These involve its extent, nature and perspectives.

Extent of World Trotskyism

It is clear that International Trotskyism has been a recognizable current in world politics for more than sixty years. It has, or has had, organizations in about sixty different countries in America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australasia. In some countries these parties or groups have existed for more than fifty years, in others they are of quite recent vintage. In any case, the mere persistence of the movement qualifies it as a serious participant in world politics, and as such worthy of study.

It is also certain that International Trotskyism grew substantially in the quarter of a century after 1960. Ernest Mandel, the principal post-World War II leader of the Belgian Trotskyists, major figure in the United Secretariat, and perhaps the best-known Marxist economist since World War II, has elaborated on this growth:

The fact is that, in spite of its splits (which are real and regretful), Trotskyism has constantly grown as an organized tendency, with influence in the organized labor movement and even in the electoral field, for the last fifteen to twenty years, whereas it had stagnated in the period 1933–1963. This growth is an undeniable fact, easily to be confirmed by many data. Electorally, Trotskyist organizations get between 2 and 3 million votes in the

world; they lead large trade unions (or have representatives even in top leaderships of trade union confederations) in a dozen countries. And around fifteen of their organizations have obviously passed the stage of "sects" and are taken seriously by workers' public opinion, and even the bourgeois press, as forces in the political life of their countries. . . . Of these fifteen, eleven are either affiliated with or sympathetic to the "official" FI (USFC led); the four others are the Moreno organization in Argentina, the Lambert FCI in France, the *Militant* group in Britain, and the Moreno/Lambert groups' affiliates in Brazil (where, however, the FI section is the strongest). Together they have a big influence in the PT, had many mayors elected, and lead trade unions counting several hundreds of thousands of members. I leave out the British SWP and the Sri Lanka LSSP as having gone beyond the limits of "Trotskyism." If you want to include them, the above figure is raised to 17.

Of course, there are many small-sized Trotskyist organizations which are nowhere near that stage. But the fact that the growth described has occurred in practically all continents (with the exception of Africa, and even there it will occur soon) confirms that it is an objective social phenomenon. Even if one regrets it, or says it is "bad," one has still to explain it, especially as it coincides with the continuous decline of the [Communist parties] in large parts of the world, and the near-demise of the Maoist organizations. I would estimate the growth to be tenfold between 1948-53 and today.¹

Elsewhere Mandel has listed the fifteen Trotskyist parties which "at least in function of their organizational strength and place in the political (trade union) life of their respective countries have passed the status of sects." These are "the FI sections of France, Mexico, Spain, Brazil, Bolivia,

Sweden, Switzerland, Japan, Belgium, Lutte Ouvrière, the French FCI [Lambertists], the Militant Group, the Moreno PST in Argentina, . . . and the Brazilian groups of Lambert and Moreno."²

Trotskyism and Contemporary Stalinism

Another indication that the Trotskyists are a force of at least some significance in the far Left of world politics is the fact that from time to time the heirs of Stalin have undertaken to denounce them. Thus in 1984 the Novosti Press Agency of Moscow put out a pamphlet by one Nikolai Vasetsky, entitled *Trotskyism Today: Whose Interests Does It Serve?* This somewhat curious document, which succeeds in discussing at some length the struggle for power in the Soviet Communist Party in the 1920s without once mentioning the name of Stalin, starts out by conceding that "the Fourth International exists and, what is more, it has broadened its sphere of operations since the end of the Second World War, having set up national branches in virtually every capitalist country."³

Vasetsky argues that "today, as many decades ago, the Trotskyites, with their 'ultra revolutionary' talk (in this they can be said to be consistent), are hindering the emergence of true revolutionary consciousness among the masses, whose anti-capitalist protest can thus be channeled into the dead end of pseudo-revolutionism. Trotskyism should be discussed today because working people, especially those who are young, who have no experience of class struggle, should have a realistic idea of the complexities involved in a socialist revolution and of the difficulties which are inevitably encountered by fights for social justice and socialism."⁴

The Russian writer argues at some length against the theory of the permanent revolution, contrasting it with the supposed ideas of Lenin, and develops the sixty-year-old

Stalinist theme that Trotsky had always stood in opposition to Lenin, even when serving with him in the leadership of the Bolshevik government. It virtually denied Trotsky any role in bringing about the Bolshevik coup of November 7, 1917.

Also, in time-tested fashion, Mr. Vasetsky pictures the Trotskyists as agents of the "class enemy." "This makes one wonder," he remarks, "whom Trotskyism serves today, why it is receiving support from the very quarters against which, if we are to believe its leaders, 'a most resolute struggle' must be waged. The answer, first of all, is that the ruling elite in the West in its fight against the revolutionary movement led by Communists does not rely on its own forces alone. It is fully aware that today it is powerless to influence the broad masses politically unless it appears to accept some elements [how far it should go in this depends on circumstances] of petty-bourgeois ideology, of petty-bourgeois revolutionism generally, and of its Trotskyist variety in particular."⁵

Perhaps one reason for such a renewed attack on International Trotskyism by the Soviet heirs of Stalin is the fact that younger generations of the inheritors of the tradition of Stalin no longer universally repel the Trotskyists. As we shall note in various segments of this book, by the late 1970s and 1980s Stalinist parties in Spain, Peru, and a few other countries were actually engaging in at least limited collaboration with local Trotskyist organizations.

Leon Trotsky and International Trotskyism

Certainly one explanation for the persistence and growth of International Trotskyism is the man who founded the movement and gave it its name. But Trotsky has also been responsible for some of the major weaknesses of International Trotskyism, particularly for its tendency to split into many competing groups and tendencies.

In his book on the Right Opposition, the author has suggested that a major explanation for the persistence of the Left Opposition of the 1930s, in contrast to the disappearance of the Right Opposition of that same period, is to be found in the fact that Leon Trotsky had eleven years outside the Soviet Union at the end of his life, whereas the man around whom the Right Opposition was organized, Nikolai Bukharin, did not.

During his last period of exile, Leon Trotsky had an opportunity to develop and publish a body of doctrine which became the ideological platform of the Trotskyist movement. He also had the chance to build up a corps of devoted followers, more or less thoroughly imbued with his ideas, who were able to carry on after his death.

We have sketched the rudiments of Trotsky's doctrine in the previous chapter. Until the 1980s none of those who claimed to be Trotsky's followers seriously challenged any element of this doctrine, with the notable exception of his interpretation of the nature of the Soviet Union, from which first the Shachtmanites in the United States and then the International Socialist Tendency dissented. Only in the early 1980s did the Socialist Workers parties of the United States and Australia begin to diverge from the Theory of Permanent Revolution, perhaps the most fundamental element of Trotsky's dogma. The Australian Party finally withdrew from the ranks of International Trotskyism altogether.

However, loyal adherence to the ideas put forward by Trotsky in the 1930s led to at least two other characteristics of the movement. These were its failure for a considerable time to develop new concepts about a world which had drastically changed since Trotsky put forth his interpretation of it, and a tendency towards endless exegesis.

Natalia Sedova Trotsky herself commented on the first of these characteristics of International Trotskyism. In her letter of resignation from the Fourth International, in 1951, she accused the leaders of the FI

with being "obsessed by old and outlived formulas."⁶

Like all dogmatic movements, the Trotskyists have engaged interminably in exegesis, that is, the appeal to authority. For the Trotskyists, the ultimate appeal is to Leon Trotsky himself (and to a less degree, to Lenin). The voluminous writings of The Old Man seem to contain materials which can be used to explain almost any turn of events even half a century after his death. Particularly in their interminable internal controversies, the various factions find in Trotsky's works documentation to prove the heretical and schismatic nature of their adversaries.

During his lifetime, Trotsky's primacy in his own movement was virtually absolute. Max Shachtman once commented:

I don't think there was ever a movement in which the authority of the leader—not authority that was exacted from the membership or imposed on the membership—but which was voluntarily and enthusiastically accepted by the membership—was as great as that which Trotsky had in the Trotskyist movement. Between Trotsky at the very top and the most prominent of his followers, there was an immense gap. Trotsky felt that he was the last remaining representative of Marxist internationalism, or Bolshevism, as he called it, and due to the exhaustion or destruction of all the other of his contemporaries, he was the only one, and in a certain sense there's absolutely no question about that. He was the link between yesterday and tomorrow, and there was no one of sufficient calibre who could, so to speak, share the lineage with him more or less equally. . . .

In the Trotskyist movement there was Trotsky and no equals. I don't mean this in the sense that he would not stand for anyone sharing his leadership. It was simply a matter that the devastation of the Communist movement was so extensive

and so thoroughgoing that what was left of it in the form of the Trotskyist movement simply amounted to the fact—pure and simple—that Trotsky was there alone as the leader, and the others were in comparison—all of them—rank and filers, with very little ability to find their way independently in political and theoretical problems.⁷

Max Shachtman also commented on another aspect of Trotsky's leadership of his movement, one which helps to explain the tendency toward factionalism which has been such a marked characteristic of International Trotskyism since its inception.

He had the habit or the manner—call it what you will—that I find very widespread, especially among the Russian Communists, of firmly supporting and defending a follower and a fellow-thinker against all criticisms and attacks up to the point where there was a break. As soon as a break occurred or a significant difference of opinion, and that difference of opinion could not be resolved very rapidly, it seemed to me that he had a tendency not only to start denouncing the dissidents for what they considered the wrongness of his position, but to go back into their political biography for years and decades before to show that they always had the tendency to be on the wrong side; that their mistake was not something new; it was not something isolated; their whole path had prepared them for this mistake. And if the polemic would develop further, it would reach the point of the statement, "Well, he never was much good in the first place."⁸

We shall see this technique applied by Trotsky in such cases as Van Overstraeten and Vereeken in Belgium, Sneevliet in The Netherlands, Alfred Rosmer, Naville, and Raymond Molinier in France, and Max Shachtman himself in the United States. Long after Trotsky's death, his followers

were frequently to use the same approach toward one another in their internecine quarrels.

Albert Glotzer has elaborated on another aspect of Trotsky's role in the movement. Commenting on his own first visit to see Trotsky late in 1931, Glotzer observes, "It did occur to me then that Trotsky . . . was not merely the ideological founder and leader of our movement, whose political conceptions, and the programs emanating from them, but he was also a vast world center to whom came great amounts of literature, papers, magazines, and correspondence from all the organizations, small groups, all factions in the international organizations, and hundreds of individuals. The pressure on him from all sides, intellectual, political, organizational and personal is hard to measure, the pressures of it being visible to an observer. He responded to all of it, participated in the problems of all the organizations, far more than was required or than he should have, even in the trivia of factional conflict. At the same time, he wrote voluminously, most of it at a high intellectual and theoretical level."⁹ In this volume, we shall have occasion to note numerous cases in which one might judge that The Old Man got involved "more than he should have" in the internecine quarrels among his followers in various countries.

The overwhelming domination of Trotsky's ideas over the movement that bears his name continued for half a century after his death. The "sacred texts" of the movement were still Trotsky's major writings, particularly the 1938 "Transitional Program" and the resolutions of the first four congresses of the Communist International which he himself had proclaimed to be the ideological basis of the movement—and which in fact were to a large degree written by him.

Both the resolutions of the early congresses of the Comintern and Trotsky's own writings of the 1930s reflected a kind of "catastrophism" and imminence of world upheaval which remained a part of the intellectual baggage of his followers for long after

his death. This attitude was clear in the predictions of all-out socialist revolution in Europe during and immediately after World War II. They were certainly a fundamental element in the Pabloite orientation of the 1950s. They led the Trotskyists for long to deny the reality of the postwar economic prosperity, and then when it began to fade to bring them to predict immediate worldwide catastrophe for the capitalist system.

Sectarianism and Schism

As we have noted, Ernest Mandel has pointed out that a few of the national Trotskyist groups existing in the 1980s became large enough to begin to be a factor of some appreciable significance in the left-wing politics of their respective nations. In the past, the Chilean Izquierda Comunista and the Vietnamese Trotskyists of the 1930s, the Bolivian Partido Obrero Revolucionario for a short period in the 1950s, and the Lanka Sama Samaja for at least twenty years after World War II were in a similar situation.

For the most part, however, the Trotskyist parties and groups have remained very small and have been what is probably best characterized as "political sects." Although supposedly political parties whose goal was political power, they have more often than not been much more concerned with being "correct" than with developing a political base which might bring them political power. The one party which actually obtained positions in a cabinet, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon, was read out of the International Trotskyist movement for doing so.

The sectarianism of the Trotskyists had undoubtedly been intensified by the smallness of their organizations. With little ability in the foreseeable future of coming to power, or even of gaining an audible voice in national politics or influence in the organized labor movement, they have been forced back upon themselves, with satisfaction coming from the purity and "correctness" of their doctrine rather than from the possibility of more material rewards. This

attitude is illustrated by the constant reiteration by both national and international Trotskyist groups of the notion that Trotskyism had the "only correct program" for world revolution in spite of the fact that nowhere had the Trotskyists succeeded in leading any specific revolution.

These same factors have tended to intensify personalism among Trotskyists. With at most a few hundred members in the great majority of cases, the influence upon them of more or less charismatic and strong-willed individuals has inevitably been more intense (and sometimes more devastating) than would be the case in larger and less sectarian kinds of organizations.

In many cases groups of intensely loyal followers formed around leaders of particular Trotskyist groups. This was certainly the case with George Vereeken in Belgium and with both James Cannon and Max Shachtman in the United States (although when the Shachtmanites entered the Socialist Party in the late 1950s I was surprised to discover that their ranks contained both strongly pro-Shachtman Shachtmanites and intensely anti-Shachtman Shachtmanites). Intense loyalty also was true of Origlass in Australia, Michel Pablo (in France and Greece), and Posadas and his followers in various countries.

In some instances a veritable "cult of personality" was developed around particular leaders who would be followed by groups of devoutly loyal supporters no matter what vagaries of doctrine or action they might undertake. This was notoriously the case with Gerry Healy in Great Britain and J. Posadas in Argentina and other Latin American countries.

All of these factors—smallness of numbers, preoccupation with doctrinal purity, and intense personal rivalries—help explain International Trotskyism's tendency toward schism.

To an outsider the reason for a continuation of long-standing divisions is by no means always clear. In the early 1980s, for instance, it seemed to the author that the

doctrinal differences which separated the majority of the United Secretariat, the Lambertist CORQI and the Moreno version of the Fourth International were minute compared to their agreement on the broad outlines of the nature of International Trotskyism. When I broached this subject to some of the people of the three groups, I was assured that "historical differences" made their reunification in the foreseeable future highly unlikely.

The Question of "Entrism"

Some of the sources of dissidence within the ranks of the various Trotskyist groups and within the international movement as a whole have been disagreements over strategy and tactics. Most fertile of all as a source of discord has been the question of "entrism."

Undoubtedly, the aspiration of all Trotskyist groups has been to become "mass" parties, able to lead the working class and its allies to revolutionary victory. With the reality that most of them remained small if not tiny organizations, however, they have almost all been faced at one time or another with the "short-run" tactic of trying to work within either the Socialist or Communist party of their respective countries. Of course, Trotsky himself recommended this tactic in the mid-1930s, and it was carried out with varying success in France, Belgium, Great Britain, the United States, India, and Australia, among other countries. But the issue did not die with Trotsky. The International Secretariat insisted on its British affiliate entering the Labor Party right after World War II, and the Fourth International expelled the majority of its French affiliate when that group did not wholeheartedly accept the entrism tactic in 1952. Subsequently the entrism tactic was used in a variety of other nations. These include Ireland, Spain, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, West Germany and several other countries, where the Trotskyist groups entered Socialist parties or dissident Communist groups.

In at least two instances the entrism tactic was converted into a strategy. This has certainly been the case with the Militant Tendency in Great Britain, which adopted the position that long-term "deep entry" into the Labor Party was the only feasible way to build up a mass following. On an international scale entrism was converted from a tactic into a strategy when Michel Pablo, the Secretary of the Fourth International, put forth in 1951-52 the notion of "entry sui generis" for all affiliates of the International, with each group entering either the Socialist or Communist Party depending on which had the wider working-class support. Pablo saw this as a long range operation made necessary by an impending Third World War and the lack of time needed to convert the Trotskyist propaganda groups into real mass parties. He even suggested that this entrism might be a matter of century-long duration.

Of course entrism (as well as reversing the process) was seldom carried forward without violent discussion and often a split in the Trotskyist ranks. In the 1930s Hugo Oehler led a split from the Workers Party of the United States against the decision to enter the Socialist Party; Georges Vereeken in Belgium and Pierre Naville in France (for a while) headed schisms over the same issue in those national Trotskyite groups.

In the early 1950s a division of the whole Fourth International was provoked by Pablo's insistence on "entrism sui generis" for virtually all of the FI's affiliates. That split was never totally repaired, efforts to reunify the International resulting rather in further schisms in both of the factions.

The entrism issue continued to be a live one in a number of the national Trotskyist groups fifty years or more after Leon Trotsky had first proposed the tactic to his followers.

International Trotskyism's Revolutionary Models

During Trotsky's lifetime and for twenty years thereafter the model of virtually all

Trotskyists was that of the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917, of which their leader had been the principal organizer. We shall note the tendency of Trotsky himself to judge the Spanish events before and during the Civil War through that prism. For two decades after his death his followers continued to have the same angle of vision.

This viewpoint was quite understandable in the case of Leon Trotsky himself, given the major role he had played in the events of 1917. It made a good deal less sense with regard to his followers after his death, who not infrequently had to make quite far-fetched analogies between events transpiring in their own countries and those that had taken place under very different circumstances in Petrograd and Moscow many years earlier.

However, starting in the 1960s various elements in International Trotskyism began to conceive of other models of successful revolution. In this evolution of their thinking, the Castro experience in Cuba was of particularly great importance. The Castro Revolution was very hard to square with the teachings and experience of Lenin and Trotsky in 1917 and thereafter. The Cuban Revolution became Marxist-Leninist considerably after it had achieved success by taking power. Furthermore, the working class had played at best a very minor role. Also the revolutionary party came into existence several years after the revolution. All of these facts were in plain contradiction with the teachings of both Lenin and Trotsky.

Different factions of International Trotskyism reacted differently to the Cuban phenomenon. The Socialist Workers Party of the United States was the first to issue credentials of a full-fledged "workers state" to the Castro regime, even before that regime had organized a revolutionary party. As we shall see, after most of the major figures of the first and second generation leadership of the SWP passed from power it was virtually converted from a Trotskyist into a Fidelista party.

After establishment of the United Secre-

tariat, that body more or less reluctantly went along with the SWP's baptism of the Castro regime as a workers' state. Other factions of the movement showed much hesitation in doing so, and even by the 1980s the Healyites were still denying this categorization to the Cuban regime.

The Castro model influenced the United Secretariat in still another way. It largely inspired the turn of USEC in the 1970s towards full endorsement of guerrilla war, at least in the developing countries, as virtually the only path to revolution there. Interestingly enough, the SWP resisted this, the official USEC position, for a decade.

Events of the later 1960s pushed much of International Trotskyism—particularly USEC—far from the orthodox path of revolution taught by Leon Trotsky. The Vietnam War and the “insurrection” of 1968 (particularly in France) were the two most important factors which led to these “deviations.” As a result of them, USEC Trotskyites developed for a time quite different notions concerning the pivotal role of the working class in the revolution in the highly industrialized states, and on a world scale the central position of those highly industrialized nations as the principal center of world revolution.

With regard to the internal situation in the highly industrialized countries both the majority of USEC and its minority led by the SWP of the United States professed to see the emergence of new revolutionary elements, including the student youth, militant feminists and racial minorities, which were going to spearhead the overthrow of capitalism. There is an almost total disappearance of any emphasis on the revolutionary role of the proletariat in the Socialist Workers Party program of the early 1970s. Only several years later did USEC adopt the “turn towards industry,” reemphasizing the role of the urban working class.

On a world scale USEC also adopted a different position during the 1960s and 1970s. World revolution was seen as breaking down into three elements: that in the old indus-

trial capitalist countries, the “political” revolution in the various “workers states,” and the “colonial and semi-colonial” revolution in the so-called Third World, priority being given to the last of these.

The Russian Question

One of the most persistent issues of debate among those considering themselves to a greater or less degree to be Trotskyists has been that of “the nature of the Soviet Union.” In the 1930s Leon Trotsky characterized the USSR as being a “degenerated workers state,” so degenerated because of its domination by a bureaucracy and its total lack of internal democracy, but nonetheless a “workers’ state” because of its maintenance of government ownership of the means of production, the state monopoly of foreign trade, and substitution of the Plan for the market. He called for “unconditional support” for the Soviet Union against all outside enemies and against any internal attempts to restore capitalism, although after 1933 calling also for a “political revolution” against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Subsequent to World War II the Trotskyists faced new complications on this issue with the appearance of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the Titoite dissidence, and the advent of the Chinese Communist regime. After first denying that anything fundamental had transpired in Eastern Europe, the Fourth International finally proclaimed those countries to be “deformed workers states,” using the same arguments that Trotsky had first used about the USSR. It was over this issue (and the continued labeling of the USSR a “degenerated workers state”) that Natalia Sedova Trotsky broke with the Fourth International.

The maintenance of this position by the great majority of International Trotskyists has involved the movement in certain logical difficulties. On the one hand, it meant that they had to ignore completely Trotsky's argument at the outset of the Second World War that if the Stalinist regime was not over-

thrown as a consequence of that conflict, he and his followers would have to face the fact that "the alternative is the following: either the Stalinist regime is a repugnant accident in the process of the transformation of the capitalist society into a socialist society, or the Stalinist regime is the first stage of a new exploitative society. If the second prediction proves to be correct, the bureaucracy will be converted, naturally, into a new exploiting class."¹⁰

But the Trotskyists' continued classification of the Stalinist-dominated regimes as "workers states," however "degenerated" and "deformed," forced them into an almost "suicidal" position. They found themselves giving "unconditional support" (at least in struggles or possible struggles against outside opponents) to regimes which quite literally killed all Trotskyists. This was the case with the Soviet Union itself, as well as with the countries of Eastern Europe, China and Vietnam. A partial exception is the regime of Fidel Castro, which merely jailed all identifiable Cuban Trotskyists.

Different elements of International Trotskyism have disagreed on the "workers state" issue, at least insofar as different national regimes were concerned. We have noted the hesitance of some groups to anoint the Castro regime, and others have had similar reticence about the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. At the opposite extreme J. Posadas during the 1960s and 1970s gave the "workers state" categorization to a wide variety of regimes, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, which were not regarded by other elements of International Trotskyism to be entitled to it.

Trotskyism and the Revolutionary Role of Stalinism

Related to their problems of continuing to define Stalinist regimes as "workers states" has been the traditional position of Leon Trotsky that the Stalinist movement was seeking to hamper the development of the

international revolution. The origins of this position go back to Trotsky's disagreement with Stalin over the latter's notion of "building socialism in one country," and Trotsky's insistence on the necessity for continued revolutionary activity outside of the USSR. In the 1930s Trotsky argued that Stalin's regime had converted the Communist International into a tool of Soviet national foreign policy rather than keeping it an instrument of international revolution. The Comintern's function, according to Trotsky, had been that of defending the continued control over the USSR by the Stalinist bureaucracy, and where that objective came into conflict with revolutionary possibilities outside of the borders of the Soviet Union those possibilities would be sacrificed. Hence the stance of Stalin and his followers was essentially reactionary according to Trotsky.

Trotsky's followers had no problem with applying this argument during the latter part of World War II when, in Western Europe at least, Stalin's influence over the Communist parties of the area was clearly exercised to thwart any possible revolution rather than to encourage it. However, belief in the inherently reactionary nature of Stalinism impeded the Trotskyists' assessment of what transpired in Eastern Europe after the war. Most of them resisted for several years acceptance of the idea that the Stalinists had in fact brought about revolutions in those countries and had established "workers states" (according to Leon Trotsky's classical formulation), however "deformed."

Conflict over this problem was one of the factors contributing to the split in the Fourth International in the early 1950s. Michel Pablo's argument that in spite of their previous historical role and in spite even of their own wishes, the Stalinists would in the future be forced by "pressure of the masses" to assume a revolutionary role, was rejected by substantial parts of the FI. In subsequent decades International Trotskyism continued to be haunted by the fact that

in spite of their supposedly "reactionary" role parties in the Stalinist tradition *did* establish regimes which most elements in International Trotskyism sooner or later came around to recognizing as "workers states." Furthermore, in other instances revolutions which did not begin as Stalinist ended up by aligning themselves with the USSR and proclaiming themselves to be "socialist." At least in the case of the Castro regime most groups accepted that it was a "workers' state," although they did not generally do so in the case of Ethiopia. Meanwhile, no revolution anywhere aligned itself with any faction of International Trotskyism.

Different elements in the international Trotskyist movement handled this quandary in different ways. At one extreme, in the early 1980s the Socialist Workers parties of the United States and Australia, together with small usɛc groups in other countries associated with one or the other of them, went the whole distance in ideological terms and repudiated the basic theoretical positions of Trotskyism. The Australians were most explicit in reassessing their position with regard to the Marxist-Leninist bona fides of Stalinist revolutionary regimes, particularly in the Indochina area, at the same time arguing that usɛc put "too much emphasis" on the need for a political revolution in the Stalinist-controlled countries. Logical consistency led the Australian swp, once it had fully accepted the revolutionary nature of the Stalinist regimes, to abandon International Trotskyism altogether.

The international Spartacist tendency (*sic*) did not go as far as the two swp's in formally changing its ideology; it went even further in its endorsement of virtually everything the Soviet regime did. This attitude was reflected in its enthusiastic endorsement of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and its violent campaign against Polish Solidarity and its strong endorsement of the suppression of that independent labor group by the Polish Stalinist regime.

The Morenoists and the Lambertist tendency stuck most closely to the original positions of Trotsky. They accepted the fact that bona fide revolutions had taken place in the countries controlled by Stalinist parties but continued to insist strongly on the "degenerated" or "deformed" nature of those "workers' states" and the need for political revolutions to remove the "bureaucracies" which had perverted those revolutions.

The majority of usɛc, particularly its European leaders, went furthest in delineating the deficiencies of the Stalinist-controlled states and in outlining the nature of the "political revolution" which was required in them. Of all the elements of International Trotskyism it was by the early 1980s the group most clearly on record in support of political democracy, with a multi-party system and the full panopoly of civil liberties as being the real objective which, after the revolutionary transformation of the economy and society, the Trotskyist movement was seeking.

Finally, the International Socialist Tendency went furthest from the original ideological position of Trotsky with regard to the "workers state" definition of the USSR by repudiating the idea that the Stalinist-controlled regimes were in any sense of the term "workers states." Although not agreeing among themselves whether those regimes were "state capitalist" or "bureaucratic collectivist," they agreed that they had nothing in common with the kind of revolution and regimes for which International Trotskyism had always fought.

Present State and Prospects of Trotskyism

The Trotskyist movement has expanded steadily since the early 1960s. During Trotsky's life it had affiliated parties or groups principally in North America and Europe, except for a handful in Latin America, and those in China and Vietnam. By the mid-1980s it had affiliates in most American and

European countries not controlled by Stalinist parties, as well as in several African and Asian nations and in Australasia.

As of the end of the 1980s the Trotskyists have never come to power in any country. Although International Trotskyism does not enjoy the support of a well established regime, as did the heirs of Stalinism, the persistence of the movement in a wide variety of countries together with the instability of the political life of most of the world's nations means that the possibility that a Trotskyist party might come to power in the foreseeable future can not be totally ruled out.

Albanian Trotskyism

Albania before World War II was—and today still is—the most backward country of Europe, economically, socially and culturally. Until 1938 it was run by King Zog, “as anachronistic as an emperor of China,”¹ and in that year was overrun and annexed by Mussolini's Italy.

In spite of its backwardness Albania contained three small groups of Communists at the outbreak of World War II. One of these, centered in the town of Koritza, had actually been founded under the leadership of Lazar Fundo in Moscow in 1928 under the name Albanian Communist Group. Its later most famous member was Enver Hoxha. A second group was based in Scutari. A third was the Youth Group, which had broken away from the Koritza group and had local nuclei in Tirana, Argirocastro, and particularly Valona. Each of these groups had perhaps three hundred members.²

In addition to these Stalinist elements there also existed a small Trotskyist faction, with perhaps ten members, headed by Aristide Quendra. René Dazy has said of it that “it disappeared in the torment of the war and the occupation without anyone ever knowing what had become of it, and apparently it played no role.”³

The only Communist element which seems to have had any degree of Marxist education and sophistication was the Youth Group. They reportedly had translated the principal works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and those of Trotsky as well.⁴

Soon after the entry of the Soviet Union into the war in 1941 the Scutari and Youth groups sought to bring about the establishment of a national Communist Party, which had not existed until that time. In the face of the reticence of the Koritza group to take such a step the other two appealed for help

to the Yugoslav Communists. Miladin Popovic and Duzane Mongocha were deputed for that purpose and succeeded in bringing about a conference in Tirana in November 1941. The Yugoslavs were apparently unhappy about the aggressiveness of the Youth representatives at that meeting. As a consequence when the Albanians agreed to allow Popovic and Mongocha to name the leadership of the new Albanian Communist Party the Yugoslavs chose the principal figures of the Koritza and Scutari groups, but only two rank and filers from among the Youth. They also named Enver Hoxha "provisional" General Secretary—a post he kept until his death more than forty years later.⁵

The Youth element continued to be a center of dissidence within the Albanian Communist Party. Instead of agreeing with the "national unity" line which the party adopted in its growing struggle against the Italian occupation they urged that the party foster the formation of workers and peasants soviets. They also protested against the "authoritarianism" of the party's leadership.⁶

The showdown between the Youth leaders and the heads of the party came in 1943. Early in that year the two principal figures in the Youth faction, Anastase Loula and Sadik Premtaj (more generally known as Djepi), were called from the guerrilla front of Valona to Tirana to present a "self-criticism" to the Political Bureau of the party. The apparent result was their expulsion from the party, although they were invited to continue to cooperate with it in the underground and guerrilla activities.⁷ Unbeknownst to them, the death of Loula, Djepi and other Youth leaders had been ordered by the Political Bureau. They were soon denounced as "traitors" and Trotskyites although they were certainly neither at that time.

The order of execution against Loula was soon carried out, but the Politburo found the murder of Djepi more difficult. He was operating in the Valona area where he was very popular among the Communist guerril-

las, and had brought many of the guerrilla leaders there into the party in the first place. However, before the year 1943 was over the national leadership of the party had succeeded by ruse and force in depriving the Youth group of their control over the guerrillas in the Valona region.⁸ As a consequence, Djepi, the principal surviving leader of the Youth element, fled to the West, first to Italy and then to France, where—since those parties knew little or nothing about the internal feuds in the Albanian party—he was helped by local Communists. He finally ended up with a job in a factory in the Paris region. There he got to know two Trotskyist workers who gave him *La Verité* to read.

Djepi discovered that *La Verité* had the same kind of criticisms of Stalinist leadership that he himself had developed while in Albania and subsequently. So, as he said, "I made contact with the Trotskyists. I talked at length with one of them, Pierre Frank, and I discovered that I had really been a Trotskyist as the Stalinists had claimed in Albania."⁹

This was in 1951. The Albanian Stalinists, who by then controlled their country and its Embassy in Paris, had not finished with Djepi. In that same year several attempts were organized by the Embassy to assassinate him in Paris. None of these succeeded, and as René Dazy has commented, "for whatever reason, it seems that they renounced the idea of liquidating him," and in 1981 Djepi was still alive.¹⁰

There is no indication that Djepi or anyone else formed any kind of organization of Trotskyist exiles in France or that the movement was revived in any way within the country after World War II.

Trotskyism in Algeria

During the Algerian war for independence, the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, then headed by Michel Pablo (Raptis), carried out extensive propaganda activities on behalf of the Algerians. The Trotskyists maintained that it was largely as a result of this activity that Raptis was arrested by the Dutch police in 1960 and was sentenced to two years in prison.

When Pablo was released he went first to Great Britain. There, through the intervention of the Algerians, he was provided with a Moroccan passport. He worked in Morocco with the exiled leaders of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), and when peace finally came in July 1962 Pablo went to Algiers where he had a long conversation with Ahmed Ben Bella, the new leader of Algeria, who ended up asking Pablo to become his own political adviser.¹

In that capacity Pablo played a significant role in the Ben Bella government. He was, for instance, a member of a four-man committee appointed to draw up a decree concerning property, particularly rural property which had been seized by Algerians when French colonials fled the country in the wake of independence.²

Pablo held his post until Ben Bella was overthrown in 1965. Although other principal figures in the International Secretariat privately told Pablo that they thought it unwise for him to be so closely associated with a non-Trotskyist chief of state, none of them had publicly opposed his working with Ben Bella.³

There is no indication that Pablo sought to use his association with the Algerian revolutionary government to organize a Trotskyist party in the country. Such a group was established at about the time Algeria received its independence, but by the faction

of International Trotskyism led by J. Posadas.

At the time that the FLN held its first national convention in April 1964 the Posadas group, known as the Groupe Quatre Internationale, Section Argelien de la Quatrième Internationale, issued two statements on the meeting. One reported the details of the convention, the other dealt with the various tendencies represented within the new government party. At one point the second document commented that "the present State apparatus is a capitalist apparatus and the government, the political power, is not in the hands of the workers and peasants, as certain ex-members of the Fourth International who have been cast aside because of their opportunism, have insisted."

The Posadista document argued nevertheless that the appearance of a left-wing tendency in the FLN convention indicated that the ground was ripe for the appearance of a "true Revolutionary Marxist Party." It then sketched "the fundamental tasks" for a founding congress of such a party. These included: "Creation of Communal Councils, formed in their majority of workers, peasants, soldiers, unemployed. . . . It is necessary also to dissolve all the special delegations imposed from above; Dissolution of the present National Assembly which represents nothing but itself. . . . Dissolution of the apparatus of repression (police) created by the provisional Executive to protect the capitalist State and creation of revolutionary vigilance committees. . . . Acceptance of the right of the UGTA [the trade union movement] to participate in all organisms of the State, and the democratic rights for all revolutionary tendencies, on the basis of unconditional defense of the revolution."⁴

The Posadas Trotskyist group in Algeria was publishing in 1964 a periodical, *Révolution Socialiste*, which was apparently appearing legally.⁵ This periodical was still reported as being published in mid-1967.⁶

Much more important than the Posadas group in Algeria was that associated with

the Lambertist tendency in International Trotskyism. It emerged in the mid-1970s as a consequence of agitation and organization by the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) among Africans resident in France, particularly among students.

When some of these students returned to Algeria they established the Committee for Liaison of Algerian Trotskyists (CLTA). They decided to publish a periodical, *Tribune Ouvrière*, "based on the Constituent Assembly and on all the democratic and workers demands leading to a worker and peasant government." They also decided to publish a theoretical journal, *L'Étincelle*. The CLTA continued to be particularly concentrated among students. A 1980 statement of the group noted "their intervention, particularly among students, among educational workers . . . "

By 1980 the members of the CLTA decided formally to establish their organization as a political party. They adopted the name Organisation Socialiste des Travailleurs, and proclaimed it to be the "Algerian Section of the Committee of Organization for the Reconstruction of the IVth International."⁷

The Organisation Socialiste des Travailleurs d'Algérie, (OST) continued to publish a monthly mimeographed periodical in French, *Tribune Ouvrière*. This dealt with internal Algerian issues, events in other parts of the world, and the activities of their tendency in International Trotskyism.

The December 1980 issue of *Tribune Ouvrière*, for example, carried a lead editorial on a recent meeting of the Parity Committee established by the Lambertist and Morenoist factions of International Trotskyism. It also carried articles dealing with the struggle for independence of the Algerian trade union movement, the UGTA, as well as the struggles of the university students. That issue of the periodical also had an attack on the past of Ben Bella, the former Algerian president who had recently been released from imprisonment, as well as denouncing

what it interpreted as the government's campaign for compulsory abortion, criticizing the regime for not dealing with the real causes of the rapid increases in Algeria's population.⁸

A later issue of *Tribune Ouvrière*, that of May 1982, carried the same kind of material. It had a statement of OST in favor of calling a constitutional assembly, an attack on the government's proposed "Personnel Statute" which the Trotskyists claimed was aimed to assure the second-rank status of women. It also dealt with the "agrarian question" and proclaimed that "the program of nationalization of the land and of collectivization of agriculture must be carried out to exclude radically the idea of expropriation of the small peasants or of their forced collectivization. . . ."⁹ The periodical also dealt with problems in such diverse countries as Morocco, Sudan, Turkey, Ethiopia, Chad, and El Salvador.

Although the OST operated more or less freely, and *Tribune Ouvrière* was able for many years to circulate without censorship, early in 1984 the government of President Chadli suddenly cracked down on the Lambertist Trotskyists. Eleven of their leaders were arrested because of their membership in the OST. They were subsequently accused of "an attempt against the security of the State."¹⁰

The Lambertists mounted a substantial propaganda campaign on behalf of their arrested Algerian comrades. These efforts were successful and in May 1984 the OST leaders and other political prisoners were finally released. Some of the OST prisoners proclaimed that they had been let go as "the fruit of a long struggle mounted by numerous and large democratic forces." Others arrested at the same time as those of the OST included friends of Ben Bella and members of the feminist movement.¹¹

Soon after the arrest of their comrades on charges of belonging to the OST, the Trotskyists put out a pamphlet entitled *Qu'est-ce que l'OST?* It traced the organization's sup-

port of trade union and peasant struggles, the fight of the Berbers for use of their own language, and the struggle for women's rights. It proclaimed the loyalty of the group to Trotskyism, and its support of the concept of permanent revolution, citing a resolution of its founding congress to the effect that "the Algerian bourgeoisie cannot resolve any of the national and democratic questions. The working class, because it is the only revolutionary class . . . is obliged to undertake to resolve all the unsettled questions, all the revolutionary democratic program."¹²

Upon the occasion of the release of these prisoners, the OSt issued a statement reasserting its support for the summoning of a constitutional assembly, a demand which they had been making virtually from their inception. "The Algerian Trotskyists struggle unconditionally for defense of democratic rights and above all for the right of the Algerian people to decide their sovereignty expressed in the demand for a sovereign constituent assembly. . . ." They went on, "For the OSt, this government, to carry out the urgent and vital tasks demanded by the interests of the working people, must be a government excluding representatives of the exploiters submitted to imperialism, a government formed by representatives of workers and peasants. . . ."¹³

By 1978 the United Secretariat also had an organization in Algeria. This was the Groupe Communiste Révolutionnaire d'Algérie (GCRA), a "sympathizing" member of USEC. The first issue of its periodical, *Et Taliaa*, was issued in 1978.¹⁴ By the early 1980s the GCRA claimed some marginal influence in the organized labor movement. In 1981 it issued a call for united action with the Communists, whose influence was strong in UGTA (the Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens), against the government's efforts to force all officials of UGTA and its affiliates to belong to the official party, the Front de Liberation Nationale.¹⁵

On the occasion of the twentieth anniver-

sary of Algerian independence, in December 1982, GCRA issued a statement in which it proclaimed that "this unusual form of economic organization of bourgeois society, State capitalism, doesn't at all modify the class nature of this society." It added that the political regime was Bonapartist, which was "the political expression, State capitalism the economic expression, of the substitution of this social bloc for a structurally very weak bourgeoisie." The system permitted the Algerian bourgeoisie "to quickly confront imperialism, not to put in question its domination over the world market, but to negotiate the redefinition of the terms of unequal exchange."¹⁶

In November 1982 *Et Taliaa* devoted much of its space to a discussion of the rise of the influence of fundamentalist Moslem groups in Algeria. It explained this phenomenon in terms of the growing economic difficulties of the workers and other social groups, and resulting disillusionment in those who had ruled the country since independence. Although attacking the government's attempts to suppress the fundamentalists, the Algerian Trotskyists expressed strong opposition to the fundamentalists' demands for an end to women's rights, and urged separation of church and state.¹⁷

Argentine Trotskyism

Argentina was the first country in Latin America in which Trotskyism emerged as an organized movement. Its founders were three workers, Roberto Guinney, Camilo López and M. Guinney. They were second-rank leaders of the Partido Comunista de la República Argentina, a group which had split from the Communist Party of Argentina in 1927.¹ By 1928 these three were supporting the position of the Left Opposition in the Soviet Union, and in 1929 they established their own Comité Comunista de Oposición [Communist Committee of Opposition—CCO]. In March 1930 the CCO published the first issue of a periodical, *La Verdad*, which stated the position of the new group, as well as publishing Lenin's "political testament."

The CCO entered into contact with the United States Trotskyists, who proudly publicized the CCO's existence. The CCO's name was soon changed to Izquierda Comunista Argentina (Argentine Communist Left—ICA). For a short while some Yiddish-speaking recruits to the ICA were able to publish a Yiddish periodical, *Communist Tribune*.

In spite of its tiny size Argentine Trotskyism was soon riven by factionalism. This arose as a consequence of the appearance of two new groups claiming allegiance to Trotskyism. One of these was led by two young men, R. Raurich and Antonio Gallo (Ontiveros), who, while students in Spain, had contact with the Spanish Trotskyists, particularly with Andrés Nin. Notified by the Spanish Trotskyists of the return of these youths in 1932, the ICA was able to contact them, but negotiations to incorpo-

rate them in the group ultimately failed. Instead, Raurich and Gallo established their own Liga Comunista Internacionalista, which began to put out a periodical, *Nueva Etapa* (New Phase).

The third Trotskyist group was led by "Pedro Milesi" (who also used the pseudonyms P. Maciel and Eduardo Islas, and whose real name may have been Pietro Boscaglia).² Milesi was expelled from the Communist Party late in 1932 and soon after that proclaimed his adherence to Trotskyism. Negotiations for the Milesi group to join forces with the ICA finally resulted in a conference early in 1933. By that time Camilo López had become seriously ill and Robert Guinney had died, with the consequence that the "unity conference" was dominated by the Milesi group. Soon afterward the ICA, which had changed its name to Liga Comunista Internacional, Sección Argentina, expelled the last of the three founders of Argentine Trotskyism, M. Guinney, from its ranks, along with Guinney's wife. The Guinney group published one issue of a periodical late in 1933 and then ceased further political activity.

During much of 1933 and 1934 the Liga Comunista Internacionalista of Raurich and Gallo and the Liga Comunista Internacional, Sección Argentina, of Pedro Milesi, carried on energetic polemics with one another, through their respective periodicals, *Nueva Etapa* and *Tribuna Leninista*. They particularly disagreed concerning the proper position to take with regard to the Radical Party, the country's largest political group, and the principal opponent of the semi-dictatorial regime of General Agustín P. Justo.

Late in 1934 Pedro Milesi was expelled from the organization which he led, for reasons which remain obscure. Thereafter it proved possible for the two rival Trotskyist factions to merge as the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (Sección Argentina). The first issue of the periodical of the new group, *IV Internacional*, appeared in April 1935.

The Liga Comunista Internacionalista

Unless otherwise noted, material dealing with Argentine Trotskyism before 1969 is adapted from Robert J. Alexander: *Trotskyism in Latin America*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1973.

[Sección Argentina] lasted for about two and a half years. It established small groups in La Plata, Córdoba and Santa Fé in addition to its principal affiliate in Buenos Aires. Among the leaders of the group were the Bolivian exile Gustavo Navarro (generally known by his pseudonym Tristán Marof), who published a review in Córdoba, *América Libre*; a disciple of Raurich, G. Liacho, who issued another periodical, *Transición*; and a young student at La Plata, generally known as Jorge Abelardo Ramos.

During 1937 there was a long controversy within the LCI concerning whether or not the Argentine Trotskyists should follow the "entrlist" policy which Trotsky had recommended several years earlier to his French followers. At the end of the year there was a split resulting from this controversy with one group, headed by C. Liacho and Jorge Abelardo Ramos, undertaking an entrlist policy in the Partido Socialista Obrero (PSO), a group which had shortly before broken away from the Socialist Party. Antonio Gallo led the faction which was opposed to entrism. In any case the last issue of the *Bulletin of the Liga* appeared in 1937.

Within the Partido Socialista Obrero the Trotskyists issued a mimeographed periodical between August and December 1937 entitled *Frente Proletario*, and with a subtitle *Boletín del Marxism Revolucionario*. Early in 1938 they held a national conference in Córdoba over which C. Liacho presided. About a year later virtually all of the Trotskyists were either expelled from the PSO or withdrew from it voluntarily.

Meanwhile, a new figure, who for some years was to be one of its principal leaders, had been attracted to the ranks of Argentine Trotskyism. This was Liborio Justo (who also used the names Quebracho and Bernal), the son of the president of Argentina, General Agustín P. Justo. Apparently until 1935 he had not been associated with any branch of the radical movement, but upon returning home from a trip to the United States Justo became a Communist Party fellow traveler.

Alienated by Stalinist persecution of their opponents in the Spanish Civil War, Liborio Justo broke dramatically with them in November 1936, announcing that he was becoming a Trotskyist. He then began publication of a *Boletín de Información*, of Trotskyist inspiration.

Justo immediately sought to bring together the divided Trotskyist ranks, calling a meeting to that end in November 1937. Although elements from both the entrlist and anti-entrlist groups, including Pedro Milesi, attended the session, it did not have the effect of bringing about unification of Argentine Trotskyism.

Rather, a new alignment appeared. One faction, in which Justo, Antonio Gallo, D. A. Siburu of Rosario, and A. Garmendia of Córdoba participated, soon took the name Grupo Obrero Revolucionario (GOR) and in April 1939 began publishing a new periodical, *La Internacional*. Quebracho (Justo) also published in this period several highly polemical pamphlets, in which he not only propagated his version of Trotskyist ideas but anathematized his enemies within the movement.

A rival group, centering on Pedro Milesi, published a magazine, *Inicial*. Those who had been expelled from the PSO joined either the GOR or the Inicial group. There also existed a small remnant of the old Liga Comunista Internacionalista, who used the name of their old periodical, *Nueva Etapa*.

Thus, at the time of Trotsky's death in the summer of 1940 his Argentine followers were badly split into at least three rival and conflicting groups. Neither Trotsky nor the Fourth International had by that time been able to intervene to try to bring peace among the warring factions, or to determine either the nature of their controversies or which group was most in line with the ideas of the Fourth International.

There is indication that the Fourth International was not very precisely informed about the situation of the Argentine Trotskyists. At the Founding Conference of the

International, Pierre Naville, in listing the groups which were "regularly affiliated," noted the Argentine organization as the "Bolshevik-Leninist Group."³ No organization with that name then existed in Argentina. Also, Naville gave no estimate of the membership of the Argentine affiliate of the International.⁴

The Emergency Conference of the Fourth International in May 1940 received a report on the FI's Latin American affiliates which noted the continued existence of three groups in Argentina claiming adherence to International Trotskyism: GOR, a new Liga Socialista Revolucionaria, which had recently been formed by a merger of the Inicial and Nueva Etapa groups, and the Liga Marxista of Córdoba, which had ten members. The report concluded that it had decided to hold in abeyance the recognition of any of these factions as the official FI affiliate in Argentina in the hope that they might be unified.⁵

On at least one occasion Trotsky had personal contact with his Argentine followers. In September 1938 Mateo Fossa, one of the few trade unionists then participating in the Argentine Trotskyist movement and at the time associated with the Liborio Justo group, was in Mexico in connection with the founding congress of the Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina (CTAL). He took advantage of his presence in Mexico to interview Trotsky. Some parts of that interview were subsequently published.

Trotsky talked to Fossa principally about the coming world war. He predicted that the war would result in "an international revolution against the rule of the rapacious capitalist cliques over humanity." Trotsky warned his visitor against seeing the war in terms of "democracy versus fascism" and urged the necessity of continuing the Latin American struggle against imperialism.

In elaborating on the anti-imperialist theme, Trotsky made a comment that was often quoted: "In Brazil there now reigns a semifascist regime that every revolutionary

can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally—in this case, I will be on the side of 'fascist' Brazil against 'democratic' Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism."⁶

Argentine Trotskyism in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s

After the death of Trotsky, the achievement of unity remained a matter of major significance in the Argentine Trotskyist movement. For the first time the Fourth International took a hand in the situation. Then from 1943 on a new problem, and new source of controversy appeared—the attitude the Trotskyists should assume toward the political movement organized by Juan Domingo Perón.

In September 1940, a month after Trotsky's death, a new effort was made to bring about unification of Argentine Trotskyists. This proved to be fruitless, but elements led by Pedro Milesi and Antonio Gallo (who had been associated with Liborio Justo's Liga Obrera Revolucionaria) joined forces to establish a new organization, the Liga Obrera Socialista (LOS). It continued publication of *Inicial*, which had originally been the periodical of the Milesi faction. The LOS sought recognition from the Fourth International, by then located in New York, as the Argentine section of the International.

It was perhaps this request which prompted the International to dispatch a representative to Buenos Aires to look at Argentine Trotskyism and try to bring about its unification. This delegate was the U.S. journalist Terence Phelan, who in Trotskyist circles was known as Sherry Mangan. He was a foreign correspondent of *Time-Life-Fortune*, and with the approval of the International Secretariat and the Socialist Work-

ers Party, to which he belonged, he accepted a South American assignment. This permitted him to double as an official representative of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International.

As a first step Phelan succeeded in bringing about formation of a Unification Committee, with representatives of all of the groups claiming adherence to the Fourth International. However, Liborio Justo, head of LOR, became increasingly critical of both the Committee and Phelan. Justo finally withdrew from the Unification Committee.

Giving up further hope of involving LOR in a newly unified Trotskyist group, Phelan went ahead with a unity conference involving all the other factions, held at the end of 1941. It established the Partido Obrero de la Revolución Socialista (PORS—Labor Party of the Socialist Revolution). Among those belonging to the new party were Carvajal (A. Narvaja), its secretary general, Jorge Abelardo Ramos, Esteban Rey, J. Posadas, and Nahuel Moreno. Phelan estimated its membership at seventy-five. The PORS was officially recognized as the Argentine section of the Fourth International. It began to publish a new periodical, *Frente Obrero*, in December 1941. Liborio Justo maintained the Liga Obrera Revolucionaria in existence for about two more years. Then, as he himself wrote, "the LOR ended by disintegrating forever."

The PORS did not last much longer than Liborio Justo's group. It reportedly made the decision to dissolve, and to stop publication of *Frente Obrero* as early as June 1943. However, the newspaper continued to appear fitfully for some years thereafter, and it was not until March 1948 that the PORS definitely ceased to exist.

A major factor in the demoralization of Argentine Trotskyism in the 1940s was the rise of the Peronista movement. After the military coup of June 4, 1943, Colonel Juan D. Perón, operating from the post of Secretary of Labor, enacted by decree a great deal of labor and social legislation and threw his

and the government's support behind those trade unions willing to work with him. By 1945 he had rallied the great majority of a substantially enlarged organized labor movement behind him. Those who had been Trotskyists were divided about how to react to the Perón phenomenon. The positions they assumed were determined to a considerable degree by their attitude toward the question of "national liberation," an issue which had first been raised within Argentine Trotskyism in the late 1930s by Liborio Justo.

In an earlier work, the present author summed up this controversy thus:

At the risk of greatly oversimplifying the issues involved in this long debate, one may say that it centered on the question of what group constituted the "principal enemy of the working class." One element argued that in the "semi-colonial" countries such as Argentina . . . as in the highly industrialized nations, the major struggle of the workers, and their vanguard party, must be against the native bourgeoisie. It denied that the national bourgeoisie had any significant revolutionary potential.

Those holding the opposing point of view argued that given the "semi-colonial" nature of such a country as Argentina, the major enemy was "imperialism." Since the interests of the national bourgeoisie were for a certain time in conflict with those of imperialism, there existed a basis of alliance for a certain period between the revolutionary workers movement and its vanguard party on the one hand, and the national bourgeoisie on the other. . . .⁷

Clearly, the opponents of the "national liberation" argument were on sounder ground in terms of Trotskyist doctrine. They were the ones who, in the last instance, remained loyal to Trotskyism. The others became Peronistas.

The more orthodox Trotskyists founded

in July 1944 the Grupo Obrero Marxista (GOM), made up principally of young people. For some time it supported a new periodical, *El Militante*, which began to appear in November 1946 under the editorship of the old Trotskyist trade union militant Mateo Fossa. By 1948, when it claimed a membership of about one hundred, the GOM was transformed into the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR), with Nahuel Moreno as its principal political figure.⁸

The POR had representation at the Second Congress of the Fourth International in 1948. There, it supported the positions of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Great Britain against the "catastrophism" of the FI leadership, particularly Michel Pablo and the Socialist Workers Party of the U.S.⁹

In 1954 the POR undertook an "entrist" experience, dissolving their group into the new Partido Socialista de la Revolución Nacional (PSRN), a pro-Peronista splinter of the very anti-Peronista Partido Socialista. They soon came to control the Buenos Aires Provincial Federation of the PSRN, and in 1954-55 put out *La Verdad* as the organ of that federation, a paper with the same name as the first Trotskyist periodical to be published in Argentina. With the overthrow of Perón, the PSRN was outlawed and *La Verdad* ceased publication.

The Moreno-Fossa group soon began to publish another periodical, *Unidad Obrera*. When elections were held in the trade unions late in 1956, they joined with some Peronistas to establish the Movimiento de Agrupaciones Obreras (MAO), which soon began to publish still another newspaper, *Palabra Obrera*.

For some time, the influence of the Trotskyists' Peronista associates was reflected in the periodical. It carried the subtitle, "organ of revolutionary worker Peronismo" and advertised that it was "under the discipline of General Perón and the Peronista Superior Council."¹⁰

Meanwhile, the POR-Palabra Obrera group had become involved in the quarrels devel-

oping within the Fourth International. At the Third Congress of the FI in 1953 they sided with the majority of the French Section, who strongly opposed the orientation towards "entristism sui generis" put forward by Michel Pablo and supported by a majority of the delegates to that meeting including the delegates from the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. Perhaps as a consequence of this the Grupo Cuarta Internacional of J. Posadas, rather than the POR, was granted recognition at the Third Congress as the Argentine section.¹¹

When in the following year the majority of the French Section was expelled from the International by Pablo and the majority of the International Executive Committee, the Argentine POR expressed its support for the French comrades.¹² When, in November 1953, the Socialist Workers Party issued a call for the formation of the International Committee, the Argentine POR immediately expressed its support and joined the new group.¹³

Subsequently, the POR-Palabra Obrera group took the lead in uniting the few other Latin American groups which sided with the International Committee—in the face of the fact that most Latin American groups affiliated with the Fourth International had sided with the International Secretariat, and formed part of its Latin American Secretariat, organized by J. Posadas. The POR action led to the formation first of the Comité Latino Americano in 1954, which became Trotskismo Ortodoxo Latinoamericano, and then of the Secretariado Latino Americano del Trotskismo Ortodoxo in 1957. Nahuel Moreno was the leader of the group through all of its name changes.¹⁴

In January 1965 the Palabra Obrera faction united with another small group, the Frente Revolucionario Indoamericanista Popular, to establish the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Party of Workers). *La Verdad* was revived as the official organ of the PRT.

In 1968 there occurred a split in the PRT

over the issue of whether the group should attempt to undertake guerrilla activities. Although earlier in the decade he had supported this idea, at the Fourth Congress of the PRT Nahuel Moreno strongly opposed adopting guerrilla war as the party's basic strategy. As a consequence the majority at the congress, which did endorse the guerrilla war line, expelled Moreno and his followers. Thereafter, there were two organizations claiming to be the PRT, which were differentiated by the names of their two periodicals: PRT La Verdad, the Moreno group, and PRT Combatiente, the pro-guerrilla war group.¹⁵

In the following year the Ninth Congress of the United Secretariat decided to accept the PRT Combatiente as the Argentine section and to give the PRT La Verdad the status of a sympathizing organization. The ostensible reason for this was that the PRT Combatiente represented the majority of the former united party.¹⁶ Of course there was the additional fact that the majority at the USEC Congress itself favored the adoption of a pro-guerrilla war strategy for all Latin America—and the issue was to cause controversy within the organization for almost a decade.

Meanwhile, another element of the anti-“national liberation” faction among the Argentine Trotskyists had established the Grupo Cuarta Internacional, subsequently renamed the Partido Obrero [Trotskista], sometime in the late 1940s. It was led by Homero Cristali, a one-time professional soccer player, who was generally known in the Trotskyist movement as J. Posadas.

The PO(T) was accepted at the Second Congress of the Fourth International in 1948 as a “sympathizing organization,” and in 1951 was given the status of a regular section by the Third Congress. At the time of the split in the International in 1952–53, the Posadas party remained with the Pabloite International Secretariat.

Under the International Secretariat Posadas organized a Latin American Bureau and for some years was very active in propagat-

ing the ideas of the movement in various parts of Latin America. He rallied around his own leadership most of the organizations which were affiliated in those years with the International Secretariat. When the so-called unification congress of the Fourth International was being planned, Posadas led a movement against this within the International Secretariat, with the end result of establishing a new and separate version of the Fourth International under the aegis of the Latin American Bureau.

Posadas remained head of the PO(T), as well as of the Latin American Bureau and then of his own version of the Fourth International. After the fall of Perón, the party put forward the unusual suggestion that when general elections were called, the central labor organization, the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT), should offer its own candidates as a first step toward establishing a new party based on the unions.

The CGT did not respond to this suggestion, so the PO(T) offered its own candidates in a number of elections. They claimed to have gotten 11,000 votes in the 1958 general election, and 52,000 in provincial elections in the following year. In 1962 they received 11,000 votes in Buenos Aires Province for their candidates for congress.

The Posadas faction had virtually no influence in the labor movement. They worked as a group in the Movimiento de Unidad y Coordinación Sindical (MUCS), the element in organized labor controlled by the Communist Party.

From time to time, the PO(T) held “ampliados” and other national meetings. In June 1967 it was reported that representatives from nineteen regional party groups attended an Enlarged Meeting of the party's Central Committee.

A third element aligned with the antinational liberation position was the Movimiento Política Obrera, which published a periodical, *Política Obrera*, beginning in 1966. During the late 1960s, the Política Obrera group was not associated with any

of the international Trotskyist tendencies. It was reported that during the 1969 "Cordobazo" uprising it took an "abstentionist" position towards that insurrectional movement on the grounds that it had been organized by the Peronista trade union "bureaucracy."¹⁷ After that uprising it called for a national general strike, and for the creation of "a workers and popular government."¹⁸ Its periodical, which came out fortnightly, carried principally news about the trade union movement and various strikes and other activities of organized labor.¹⁹

Finally, the "national liberation" faction of Argentine Trotskyists evolved in a Peronista direction. Jorge Abelardo Ramos, the principal leader of that element, published in 1945 and 1946 a periodical called *Octubre* (*October*), which gave "critical" support to the Peronistas. In the years that followed, they put out other periodicals, *Izquierda* and *Política*, and ran a publishing house which brought out Spanish editions of several of Trotsky's works, as well as a few books about Trotsky. However, they began to refer to themselves not as Trotskyists, but as the *Izquierda Nacional* (National Left).

In 1962 the Ramos group organized the Partido Socialista de la Izquierda Nacional, which published a periodical *Izquierda Nacional*. The party persisted throughout the rest of the 1960s, although apparently not running candidates in any of the elections of the period and having little or no trade union influence.

Evolution of Argentine Trotskyism in 1970s and Early 1980s

Argentine Trotskyists remained split into several contending factions in the decade and a half following the "Cordobazo" of 1969. During the first part of this period the two most important factions were the groups into which the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores [PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party] had divided after 1968, both

of which were associated with the United Secretariat. However, during the late 1970s the guerrilla-oriented element of the PRT was virtually wiped out and what remained dissociated itself from Trotskyism. New factions developed, and throughout the period there continued to exist smaller organizations affiliated with different tendencies of International Trotskyism.

The PRT-ERP

During the two years following the 1968 split in the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, the PRT Combatiente group evolved in the direction of a general guerrilla strategy both in an ideological and a practical sense. A statement of the group soon after the "Cordobazo" uprising of May 1969 proclaimed that "obviously, even if the May explosion had had a conscious insurrectional character and resulted in a conscious attempt to seize power, its real possibilities would have inevitably been limited by the lack of a party—a leadership, organization and program. Its possibilities would have been limited by the lack also of a revolutionary army capable of militarily defeating the capitalist army. . . . It is such a revolutionary army that will make possible a seizure of power. . . . We must not wait to build this army, as the promoters of spontaneism claim, until the masses go into the street in an upsurge producing new insurrectional explosions. This army must be constructed on a steady day-to-day basis, even during periods when the class struggle is quiet."²⁰

A statement of the party published in January 1971 traced the evolution of the PRT between 1968 and 1970. It said that "during these two years, the party advanced, confusedly but firmly—incorporating the experience of the continental revolution in the decade of the seventies, incorporating and discussing the principles of 'Maoism,' and the propositions of 'Marighelism' and of the 'Tupamaros,' thereby indicating its permanent radicalization."

However, at the same time, "on the terrain of practice and despite the internal difficulties, actions of all kinds were carried out . . . [expropriations, accumulation of arms, etc.], which sharpened the contradictions within the organization. . . . Moreover, the party's intentions of defending its militants who fell into the hands of the enemy was shown by actions designed to win the release of prisoners."

The denouement of this evolutionary process was the Fifth Congress of the PRT, which met in July 1970. There "the firm decision was reached to clear the internal contradictions out of the way in order to reach a new level of struggle . . . it was decided to organize the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*, which is to be a proletarian army in its social composition, revolutionary in its practice, and which, because it must operate within the framework of a people's civil war, will assume the form of a mass organization."²¹

This same statement set forth the basic orientation of the PRT-ERP. It said that "the strategic principle guiding us is to extend the war, which in our opinion has already begun. We want to make completely clear that we are not trying to *win* this war at the moment but to extend it through our role of armed detachment of the vanguard (because we do not claim to *be* the vanguard, which in our country does not exist as a constituted organization). We carry forward this extension of the people's civil war through political action and military action."

The statement also explained the relationship between the political party, the PRT, and the military group, the ERP. It said that "the ERP is struggling for a revolutionary people's government while the PRT is a Marxist-Leninist organization, linked to the Fourth International, which is struggling for a socialist government. The only requirement to join the ERP is a will to fight and hatred of the dictatorship and of imperialism. In all of the armed groups of the ERP there are PRT 'political commissars' who are

the nucleus and political leadership, but who do not always hold the military leadership."²²

During the next few years, the ERP carried out a large number of "operations." It was reported in June 1971 that it had already carried off 150 of these. They included kidnapping of prominent figures and holding them for ransom, holding up banks, and taking over television studios to broadcast their revolutionary message.²³

Early in 1972 the ERP carried out several of its most spectacular "operations." On January 29 it seized the equivalent of \$418,000 from the National Bank of Development branch in Cordoba.²⁴ In late March an ERP group kidnapped the representative in Argentina of the Fiat Co., Oberdan Sallustro, and later murdered him when the government refused the ERP's price for his release. Early in May they announced that a "death sentence" had been passed on Felix Ian Devale, a Belgian representative of the Coca Cola Co.²⁵ On April 10, in a combined operation with the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*, a Peronista guerrilla group, the ERP murdered General Juan Carlos Sánchez, commander of the Second Army Corps, in Rosario.²⁶

Another spectacular "operation" of the ERP and Peronista guerrilla groups was the escape from the Rawson military prison in the South on August 15, 1972 of six guerrilla prisoners, including Mario Roberto Santucho, the principal leader of the PRT-ERP. But only a week later fifteen out of nineteen others who had not been able to escape in the Rawson breakout were killed under very suspicious circumstances at the Trelow naval base, not far from Rawson. Among those killed was Santucho's wife.²⁷

The "redemocratization" of the country under President Alejandro Lanusse, which led ultimately to elections which brought the Peronistas back to power for the first time in eighteen years, did not influence the PRT-ERP to diminish their guerrilla activities. In fact, in the period before and just

after the March 1973 elections they intensified those activities. In December 1972 they assassinated Admiral Rodolfo Berisso.²⁸ Late in March they seized temporary control of the Atucha atomic reactor plant northeast of Buenos Aires,²⁹ on April 2 they kidnapped Admiral Francisco Alemán. On April 30 they assassinated Admiral Hermes José Quijada. These were only a few of their "operations" during this period.³⁰

When President-elect Héctor Cámpora issued an appeal to all of the guerrilla groups for a "truce," official spokesmen for the PRT-ERP replied that "we believe that the Cámpora government represents the popular will. Out of respect for this will, our organization will not attack the new government as long as it does not attack the people or the guerrilla movement. Our organization will continue to struggle militarily against the large exploitative companies, imperialist ones for the most part, and the counter-revolutionary armed forces. But it will not direct its attacks against government institutions or against any member of the government of President Cámpora. . . . As for the police. . . the ERP will suspend its attack against it as long as it does not cooperate with the army in hunting down the guerrilla movement and in repressing popular demonstrations."³¹

This position was reiterated by Mario Roberto Santucho in a televised news conference he gave late in June. When asked whether the ERP would cease kidnapping foreign businessmen, he replied, "As long as imperialist companies continue exploiting the people we will take measures."³²

After the resignation of President Cámpora, paving the way for the reelection of President Juan Perón, the PRT-ERP issued a statement to the effect that "The resignation of Cámpora . . . fits into the framework of the offensive by the counterrevolutionary forces. Let us not repeat the defeats of 1955 and 1966."³³ Two weeks later, Santucho published an article in which he said that "from the facts disclosed it is clear that the

true leader of the counterrevolution, the true leader of the present counterrevolutionary autocoup and the true leader of the repressive policy, which is the new government's most probable immediate policy, is precisely General Juan Domingo Perón."³⁴

The open showdown between the PRT-ERP and the government came late in September, right before the inauguration of Perón, when the secretary general of the Confederación General del Trabajo, the veteran Peronista labor leader José Rucci, was assassinated. Local Buenos Aires radio stations received anonymous calls from people purporting to speak for the ERP claiming that it had "executed" Rucci.³⁵ As early as June 1972 it had been reported that the ERP had sentenced Rucci to death.³⁶ However, Mario Roberto Santucho, then in Paris, denied that the ERP had assassinated the labor leader.³⁷

Whatever the facts, President Perón and his Justicialista Movement placed the blame for Rucci's murder on the ERP. Perón himself denounced "the Marxists," and Julián Licastro, one of the heads of Perón's Justicialista Movement, announced that "We are at war with the ERP."³⁸

Throughout the rest of the second Peronista regime, first under General Perón and then after his death in June 1974 under his wife and successor, Isabel Perón, the PRT-ERP continued their guerrilla campaign. In February 1974 it was announced that a revolutionary alliance had been signed among the ERP, the Chilean Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, the Bolivian Ejército de Liberación Nacional, and the Tupamaros of Uruguay. Their announcement of this pact proclaimed, "We are united by our understanding that the only viable strategy in Latin America is one of revolutionary war. This revolutionary war is a complex process of both armed and unarmed, peaceful and violent, mass struggle in which all forms develop harmoniously, converging around the axis of armed struggle."³⁹

However, in 1975-76 the PRT-ERP was virtually destroyed by the Argentine military.

The ERP made the mistake early in 1975 of shifting their center of operations from the cities to the rural sections of the province of Tucumán. Several hundred members of the group sought to set up there a "liberated zone." In "a war in which there are apparently no prisoners and in which the military make little distinction between guerrillas carrying weapons and collaborators serving as couriers or supplying the men in the hills," as *New York Times* correspondent Juan de Onis reported, the PRT-ERP rural guerrillas were virtually wiped out.⁴⁰

A few months after the overthrow of the regime of President Isabel Perón, the PRT-ERP mobilized most of its remaining people to attack a military garrison in Avellaneda, near the city of Buenos Aires. They rushed the barracks, got in, and immediately were faced with lights from all sides, and were slaughtered by the military. A few of the people who had attacked the barracks got away, but were cornered in a slum not far away and were virtually all killed.⁴¹ Mario Roberto Santucho and some of the other top leaders succeeded in getting back to Buenos Aires. There, betrayed to the military by one of their own number, two groups of PRT-ERP leaders were attacked in two different apartment houses by Army people. Among those killed were Mario Roberto Santucho and Enrique Gorriaran Merlo, by then reputed to be the second in command of what remained of the PRT-ERP.⁴²

Most of the few remaining members of the group were apparently in jail. It was reported in July 1980 that four PRT-ERP prisoners in a federal penitentiary near Buenos Aires had "committed suicide."⁴³

By the time it virtually disappeared from the Argentine political scene, the PRT-ERP had abandoned Trotskyism. As early as the PRT 1970 congress the party declared in a resolution that "the Trotskyist movement, it must be explained, involves heterogeneous sectors: from counterrevolutionary adventurers who use its banner while at the same time prostituting it, to consistent rev-

olutionists. . . . We confirm our adherence to the Fourth International while at the same time we are conscious of the fact that we must have no illusions that it can become the world revolutionary leadership that we consider necessary. This should neither hinder nor facilitate the closest relationships with non-Trotskyist revolutionary currents throughout the entire world, especially with the organizations engaged in struggle in Latin America, together with whom we will succeed, by significantly developing our war, in gaining a hearing from the Communist parties of the revolutionary workers' states."⁴⁴

Three years later, Mario Roberto Santucho, in an interview with *Clarín*, a Buenos Aires daily, said that "The ERP is not Trotskyist. It has an anti-imperialist and socialist program, and it includes Marxists, Peronists, and Christians. Of its members, 38 percent are workers. . . . The Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores exercises leadership and defines itself as Marxist-Leninist. It was linked to the 'Fourth International,' but we have moved away."⁴⁵

The PRT had broken with Trotskyism by the time of the 10th Congress of the United Secretariat in 1974. That meeting adopted an extensive resolution on "The Political Crisis and the Revolutionary Perspectives in Argentina," which contained much "criticism and self-criticism" concerning the subject. This resolution proclaimed that "the attitude of the IV International toward the PRT must be politically classified as opportunist. The lack of necessary debate with the Argentine comrades is still more grave if it is considered that in addition to the positions of the Congress of the PRT, already known at the World Congress, there were other things which should again have alerted us about the dangers of the orientation of the PRT. . . ."⁴⁶

The resolution also concluded that "the point of view of the centrist direction of the PRT, its rupture with the IV International is at the same time a consequence and a step

necessary for an increasingly rightist evolution. The pressures of the Cuban leadership had an important role in this evolution and in the rupture with the International."⁴⁷

At least partly because of the break of the PRT-ERP leadership with Trotskyism the group suffered a number of splits. As early as the spring of 1970 a faction calling itself the Tendencia Obrera broke away. Subsequently the Grupo Obrero Revolucionario withdrew in 1971, and the Leninist Tendency in the summer of 1972.⁴⁸ Of these early breakaway groups from the PRT-ERP, only the Grupo Obrero Revolucionario appears ultimately to have been accepted as a sympathizing member of the United Secretariat.⁴⁹

Then in 1973 the PRT-ERP suffered two other divisions. One group, which took the name Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo Agosto 22, took a position during the 1973 elections of supporting the Peronista coalition Frejuli.⁵⁰ Whereas this break of the August 22 group might be regarded as a split to the "Right," the PRT-ERP also suffered a schism to the Left, the so-called "Fracción Roja" of the PRT. One of its criticisms of the Santucho majority in the organization was the break of the Santucho leadership with Trotskyism. It accused the Santucho leadership of being too friendly to the Peronistas in 1973.⁵¹ It subsequently took the name Liga Comunista Revolucionaria, which also became a sympathizing organization of the United Secretariat.⁵²

The PRT La Verdad-PST

The faction of the original Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores which in 1968 opposed the adoption of the guerrilla warfare strategy underwent a very different evolution from that of the PRT Combatiente. It aimed toward developing a "mass party" and by the early 1980s was one of the largest Trotskyist organizations in the world.

The PRT La Verdad continued to exist as such until late in 1971. At that time, it

merged with a faction of the Socialist Party. Since the late 1950s the Socialist Party had been divided between the Partido Socialista Democrático, a very strongly anti-Peronista and anti-Castroite group headed by Américo Ghioldi and a group which sought to work with elements among the Peronistas and had some sympathy for the Castro regime, the Partido Socialista Argentino (PSA). The PSA underwent several splits, one of these occurring early in 1971, when there emerged the Partido Socialista Popular, headed by Alicia Moreau de Justo, and the Partido Socialista Argentino, led by Juan Carlos Corral.

It was with the Corral group that the PRT La Verdad merged, under the name of the Partido Socialista Argentino. The new PSA began publishing *Avanzada Socialista*, which took the place of the PRT periodical *La Verdad*.

Unity of the PSA and PRT was on the basis of a declaration of principles which was unanimously agreed to by the executive committees of the two groups, and contained relatively little traditional Trotskyist phraseology. It proclaimed "that the party, through a front of the workers and the exploited masses, must tirelessly struggle to bring about a workers' and people's government that will assure national liberation and the revolutionary construction of socialism. Both committees stress the fact that although it may proclaim itself to be socialist, no state is truly socialist unless the working class exercises direct control over the entire state apparatus—the armed forces, the executive administration, the courts, and the legislative power."

The document denounced all of the coalitions of parties which were then functioning and were negotiating with the government and with Juan Perón with a view to holding elections to put an end to the military regime which had been in power since mid-1966. It argued that "the only combination in which the proletariat and its party can participate is one that moves toward the conquest of state power by the working class, that is,

socialist and working-class combinations. . . . It also denounced "the sinister union bureaucracy" of the Peronistas.

In the international sphere the PSA-PRT unity document argued that "there must be stronger ties with and total support for all peoples struggling for their liberation, for all the forces and all the systems that are heroically struggling to build socialism, and especially for the revolutionary movements of Latin America, for socialist Cuba, and for the present vanguard of the world revolution—the heroic Vietnamese guerrillas."

Perhaps more orthodox Trotskyist thought was the passage which said that "without failing to defend the so-called socialist states from any imperialist attack, we will support any struggles by the working class of those countries for socialist democracy, since socialism is the highest expression of democracy for the workers and toiling masses—which means complete freedom of expression and criticism for the workers and their organizations, parties and unions."

The final passage dealing with international matters was somewhat equivocal in Trotskyist terms. It said that "while recognizing the need for an International, neither of the executive committees, nor the party, will yield their inalienable right to determine strategy and tactics to any leadership or tendency that is not rooted in the proletariat and the Argentine people."

The unity document ended with a long series of "demands for immediate struggle." These included demands for full restoration of political democracy, complete reorganization and democratization of the labor movement, and a wide variety of economic, social, educational and other reforms. It ended by pledging to "struggle resolutely for the only solution for the country and the workers—a workers and people's government; for the convocation of a free and sovereign constituent assembly on the basis of a genuinely democratic ballot; and to lay the basis for building a *Socialist Argentina*."⁵³

One of the early activities of the party was running a tour for Linda Jenness, the 1972 candidate for president of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. Particularly, the culminating meeting of this tour, in Buenos Aires, was cosponsored by the PSA, the Partido Socialista Popular, and the Partido Socialista Democrático.⁵⁴

The party was quickly thrown into preparation for the general election which was finally held in March 1973. The first congress of the party (labelled the Fifty-First Convention of the Socialist Party), held in June 1972 pledged it to work for a socialist and labor ticket. It urged militant trade unionists "as well as all the class-struggle tendencies and activists involved in the new day-to-day struggles to use the recognized legal status of the Partido Socialista to constitute a force that can unify the new revolutionary worker and student vanguard on a national scale. . . ."⁵⁵

In December 1972 the party held another congress. By that time it had obtained legal recognition for electoral purposes as the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST), and had been able to get together a group of trade unionists in a Frente Obrero (Workers Front). The PST congress offered to give 75 percent of the positions on its electoral lists to trade unionists from the Frente Obrero. It also offered to name José Francisco Páez, a militant metallurgical union leader from Córdoba, and Leandro Fote, secretary of a sugar workers' union in Tucumán, as its presidential and vice presidential nominees. When Páez and Fote turned down the honor the PST congress named Juan Carlos Corral and Nora Sciaponi, two PST leaders, as its nominees.

The December 1972 congress was attended by 195 delegates from the city of Buenos Aires and twelve provinces. At the same time a congress of the Juventud Socialista de Avanzada (JSA—Vanguard Socialist Youth) met, attended by 700 people, and claimed total membership of 2,000.⁵⁶

One of the most important incidents dur-

ing this pre-election period was the temporary return of Juan Perón to Argentina in November 1972. He met with leaders of virtually all of the country's parties, but the PST was one of the very few groups which refused to meet with the ex-president.⁵⁷

In eleven provinces and the Federal Capital, the PST ran some 2,200 candidates in the 1973 election. Many of these were not members of the party, and a considerable number were more or less well-known left-wing trade union leaders. In Córdoba the metal workers leader, José Páez, who had turned down the presidential nomination, ran as candidate for governor. In Buenos Aires Province a bank workers leader, Jorge Mera, was the gubernatorial candidate. In the Federal Capital the PST and Partido Socialista Popular ran joint candidates, and in some of the provinces members of the PSP ran as PST nominees.⁵⁸

When the votes were finally cast the PST ticket came eighth among nine lists of candidates offered by various parties and coalitions, with approximately 76,000 votes, or 0.62 percent of the total. However, Arturo Gómez, organizational secretary of the party, when asked what the party had gotten out of the election, said, "First, we came out of it with a national party that is now well known. . . . Second, we tightened our ties with the workers through our campaign activities. . . . Third, we were able to increase the circulation of our paper, *Avanzada Socialista*, from 8,000 at the start of the campaign to 25,000 on the eve of the elections. Fourth, we began the campaign last year with ten local headquarters. Now we have seventy. Fifth, of those who applied for membership in the PST during the campaign, we have accepted 1,500 as probationary members."⁵⁹

Héctor Cámpora, the candidate of the Peronistas, was elected president in the March 1973 election. Within a few weeks of taking office he and his vice president resigned, necessitating new presidential elections which were held on September 23, 1973.

This time Juan Domingo Perón and his wife, Isabel, were the victorious Peronista nominees.

Before this second election, the PST held an emergency convention which "went on under portraits of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky," and decided once again to name its own candidates. Juan Carlos Corral and José Páez were nominated for the presidency and vice presidency.⁶⁰

In December 1973, after the reelection of Perón, the PST held still another national congress. It was attended by 571 delegates, each of whom was said to represent ten members. There were fraternal delegates from organizations in Uruguay, Bolivia, Brazil, and the SWP of the United States, and greetings from parties and groups in several other countries. Juan Carlos Corral declared in his report to the congress that the return of the Peronistas to power created an "opportunity to train and prepare our cadres for the next large-scale upsurge of the working class, which the PST must get into a position to lead."⁶¹

When Juan Perón returned to Argentina, and to the presidency, he came offering an olive branch to his traditional opponents, the parties and groups which had opposed him during his first period in power and subsequently. To this end he met with a number of those opposition groups on various occasions.

One such encounter was on March 22, 1974, when a group of opposition parties, one of which was the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, met with the president at their request. At that meeting a statement was issued by the groups participating, which started by saying that "the participants have confirmed their fundamental commitment to spare no effort to maintain and consolidate the process of institutionalization in our country within the context of the democratic system and through the practice of coexistence and constructive dialogue. . . ."

The supposed signing of this document by

the PST aroused a scandal within the United Secretariat. *Rouge*, the organ of the French affiliate of USEC, which was aligned with the so-called International Majority Tendency which supported the guerrilla war line in Latin America and the PRT-ERP in Argentina, denounced the PST's signing as "class collaboration." However, the PST subsequently announced that it had not in fact signed the "incriminating" statement.⁶²

President Juan Perón died at the end of June 1974 and was succeeded by his vice president and wife, Isabel Perón. The political situation deteriorated drastically under President Isabel Perón, who was finally overthrown by the military in March 1976, beginning a period of almost eight years of rule by the armed forces.

During both the second Peronista period and the military regime, right-wing gangs and death squads committed large numbers of atrocities against not only left-wing groups but [after the military seized power], virtually all civilian political groups. The PST suffered extensively from this persecution.

Juan Carlos Corral was jailed for a short while in March 1974.⁶³ Eight PST members were kidnapped and murdered in September 1975.⁶⁴ In 1977 Enrique Broquen, principal legal adviser of the PST, was kidnapped.⁶⁵ In October 1978 it was said that there were at least forty PST members being held by the repressive forces.⁶⁶

In 1977 Nahuel Moreno and some of the other leaders of the PST went into exile, settling in Bogotá, Colombia, where they began to publish a new periodical, *Revista de América*. That magazine was described by one of the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States as having "well-illustrated articles" which "cover a wide range of countries. . . . Such subjects as ecology and international youth employment are also dealt with." However, Gerry Foley complained that the publication was "marked by narrow factional concerns that contrast with its format which was obvi-

ously designed to appeal to a wide audience."⁶⁷

Drastic mismanagement of the Argentine economy undermined the military regime, which had three successive presidents, Generals Jorge Videla, Roberto Viola and Leopoldo Galtieri. Then, when the Galtieri government's invasion of the Islas Malvinas [Falkland Islands] was decisively defeated by the British in 1982 the fate of the armed forces regime was sealed. Galtieri's successor, General Reynaldo Bignone, finally ordered general elections in October 1983, which were won by the Radical Party's nominee, Raúl Alfonsín.

At the time of the invasion of the Malvinas the PST strongly supported the Argentine government action. Juan Carlos Pereira wrote in the PST periodical *Pelabra Socialista*:

In any confrontation between an imperialist country—in this case England—and a semi-colonial one—such as Argentina—we socialists are always on the side of the semi-colonial country against the imperialist one. . . . That is to say, we are *against England*, despite the fact that it has a bourgeois-democratic government, and on the *side of Argentina*, despite the malignant dictatorship that governs it. If there is a war, we socialists will be for the victory of the Argentine army, even though Galtieri commands it at the outset, and for the defeat of the British one.

To sum up, the only way to safeguard our national sovereignty against *all* the imperialist countries is a workers and people's government that would break the colonial pacts that subordinate Argentina to imperialism (the Rio Treaty, the Inter American Defense Treaty, etc.); break with the International Monetary Fund; nationalize without compensation all the foreign capitalist enterprises; and repudiate the foreign debt."⁶⁸

By 1982 the PST claimed to have 14,000 members and to be the largest party any-

where in the world claiming adherence to International Trotskyism.⁶⁹ However, leaders of other tendencies in the movement doubt that they had more than 1,000 members, particularly in view of the persecution to which they had been submitted by the military dictatorship.⁷⁰

As the military dictatorship disintegrated and the 1983 electoral campaign got underway, the PST was reorganized as the Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS), which was officially established in September 1982. It began publishing a new periodical, *Solidaridad Socialista* (Socialist Solidarity). A year later, the circulation of that periodical was said to be 46,000 copies, and the party claimed to have 4,000 party headquarters in more than fifty cities. It was also claimed that MAS members were active in more than a thousand work centers throughout the country.⁷¹

The MAS named as its candidate for president Luis Zamora, a human rights lawyer who had been active in defending political prisoners during the military dictatorship. For the vice presidency they named Mora Ciapponi, a one-time textile worker who had also been the vice presidential nominee of the PST in 1973, and who in 1979 had participated in the Simón Bolívar Brigade in the last phases of the struggle against the Somoza regime in Nicaragua.⁷² They received about 43,000 votes.⁷³

With the victory of Raúl Alfonsín of the Radical Party most other parties announced at least their tentative support for the new civilian government. The MAS, however, proclaimed that "the socialists of MAS demand that no confidence or political support be given to Dr. Alfonsín and his government. We call for breaking this bear's embrace that is national unity with the oligarchy and imperialism, to fight frankly against them. . . ."⁷⁴

In spite of the somewhat equivocal position taken in the unity resolution of the PRT La Verdad and the PSA, which led to the establishment of the Partido Socialista de

los Trabajadores, the PST continued to be a "sympathizing organization" of the United Secretariat. The USEC 10th Congress resolution on Argentina, cited earlier, declared that "the majority are students and workers who wish sincerely to struggle for socialism and sympathize with Trotskyism. In consequence, the World Congress is favorable to maintaining fraternal relations between the IV International and the PST as a sympathizing organization. What cannot be tolerated is to give official endorsement to a political line and a practice which are too far from the principles and the traditions of our movement."⁷⁵

Nahuel Moreno and the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores of Argentine took the lead in the breakaway of the so-called Bolshevik Faction from the USEC late in 1979. After a short but unsuccessful attempt at unity between the Bolshevik Faction and the Lambertist Committee of Reorganization of the Fourth International, the Bolshevik Faction established the International Workers League (Fourth International) as a separate tendency in International Trotskyism.

The Movimiento Al Socialismo held its second congress in Buenos Aires in March 1985. Some 336 delegates and 1,500 observers were reported as having been present. Among the invited visitors was Liborio Justo. Of the delegates 55 percent were said to be "workers from construction, meat packing, auto, machinists, railroad, food processing, bottling, sanitation and public works unions. Many were also members of elected factory committees or rank and file delegates for their union." In addition, 30 percent of the delegates were white-collar workers, and 13 percent students.

It was reported to the convention that MAS members were active in "over 1,000 factories and workplaces and have 140 public headquarters throughout the country" and were carrying on an active campaign against the "Peronist union bureaucrats" who had long dominated the organized labor move-

ment. The convention called for the formation of a United Left Electoral Front with the Communist Party and the Workers Party for the 1985 congressional elections.⁷⁶

Other Argentine Trotskyist Groups

At least three other groups which were or had been part of International Trotskyism existed in Argentina in the 1970s and early 1980s. These were the Posadas Partido Obrero (Trotskista), the Política Obrera group, and the "national revolution" faction.

The Partido Obrero (Trotskista) was the oldest Trotskyist group with continuous existence in Argentina. In the early 1970s it was pushing the general Posadas line in favor of the establishment of a "labor party based on the unions."⁷⁷ It also strongly attacked the guerrilla efforts of the PRT-ERP, claiming that kidnapping of the head of the Fiat firm in Argentina by the PRT-ERP "is another action of the CIA."⁷⁸ In 1975 a leader of its youth group was quoted as saying that "the foquistas present their actions as reprisals against the right-wing terrorist offensive, but the effect of such actions is to prevent a mass response by the working class and to keep the proletariat out of the political arena. . . . Its violence is in no way revolutionary, even assuming that it does not directly serve the interests of the enemy and the counterrevolution."⁷⁹

As was true with most of the Posadista groups by the 1970s, the PO(T) was spending most of its energies and financial resources on publishing its periodical, *Voz Proletaria*. There is no material available to indicate how regularly they were able to put out this publication after the advent of the military dictatorship in March 1976, or whether the PO(T) survived the death of J. Posadas in 1982.

The Política Obrera group is reported (by an unfriendly source) to have had about 250 members at the beginning of the 1970s. During the decade it suffered several splits, and

that same source claimed that by the early 1980s Política Obrera had only about one hundred members.⁸⁰

As the right-wing terror evolved during the second Peronista regime and afterwards, Política Obrera was one of its victims. In March 1975 a leader of their youth group was quoted as saying, "We think that only a real mobilization, one that arouses the democratic impulses of the broadest masses, can put the brakes on right-wing terrorism, while dealing a stiff blow to the state that upholds it and thereby opening the road to a government of the workers organizations."⁸¹

In mid-1977 Pablo Riesnik, editor of *Política Obrera*, was picked up by right-wing terrorists but was subsequently released. At the time of Riesnik's release, three other Política Obrera leaders who had been kidnapped were still missing.⁸²

Política Obrera had virtually no influence in the organized labor movement. There is no indication that the group participated in elections in its own right, although in one of the elections of 1973 it called upon its members and followers to vote for the PSt or to cast a blank ballot.⁸³

With the establishment of the Committee of Organization for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI) by the Lambertist tendency, in 1972, Política Obrera, which had not until then had any international affiliation, joined that group. It remained associated with CORQI for almost seven years.

In January 1979 the Eighth Session of the International Bureau of CORQI decided to expel Política Obrera from its ranks. The group was accused of trying to organize a schism among the Latin American affiliates of CORQI, and of following policies which were not consistent with Trotskyism. During the period of the second Perón regime it was accused of following policies friendly to that regime. Then it was alleged that after the coup against President Isabel Perón, at its Second Congress in March 1977, Política

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Obrera had adopted a policy of supporting supposedly more "liberal" elements in the generally "semi-Bonapartist" regime of General Jorge Videla.⁸⁴

Subsequent to its expulsion from the CORQT, Política Obrera joined a small faction known as the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. With the 1983 election which ended the military dictatorship, Política Obrera changed its name to Partido Obrero. It issued a call to the Intransigent Party, the Communists, a left-wing Peronista group, and MAS to run joint slates in the election. When this brought no response, they named their own candidate for president and vice president: Gregorio Flores, an auto workers leader from Córdoba, and Catalina Raimundo de Guagnini, a teacher and leader of the National Secretariat of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared.⁸⁵ The Partido Obrero mobilized 70,000 supporters to get a place on the ballot. However, in the face of the polarization of the vote between the Peronistas and the Radical Party the Partido Obrero nominees received only 13,000 votes.⁸⁶

The final Argentine group with Trotskyist antecedents was that headed by Jorge Abelardo Ramos. By the early 1970s the Partido Socialista de la Izquierda Nacional had merged with some other small groups to form the Frente de Izquierda Popular (FIP). It named Ramos as its candidate for president in the first election in 1973, which brought the Peronista candidate Héctor Cámpora to power. They presented "sixty revolutionary measures" which they promised to adopt immediately upon the victory of their party.⁸⁷ In the second 1973 election the FIP supported the candidacy of Juan Perón. They announced at that time that they had organized groups in 21 of the 24 electoral districts (provinces, territories and Federal Capital) into which the country was divided.⁸⁸ By the early 1970s the Ramos group no longer considered themselves to be Trotskyists.⁸⁹

The history of Trotskyism in Australia divides into two clearly separate periods. The movement first appeared in the early 1930s and lasted for about two decades, after which it very nearly disappeared. It then revived in the latter part of the 1960s as a consequence of the youth revolt of that period, and although undergoing a series of splits remained thereafter a significant element in the far Left of national politics. In the present chapter we shall deal with the first phase of the history of the Australian movement. Then we shall trace its evolution in the second period.

The Origins of Australian Trotskyism

Australian Trotskyism had its origins among members of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) who were disillusioned with the growing Stalinization of the CPA after the Comintern's Sixth Congress. It was perhaps inevitable that sooner or later they should turn toward the ideas and personality of Stalin's most brilliant and acerbic critic, Leon Trotsky. It was specifically through the Trotskyist movement of the United States that Trotsky's ideas were first introduced into Australia. There thus began a close association between Australian Trotskyism and that of the United States which lasted for half a century. Dave Deutschman has observed that "the first real contact with the International Trotskyist movement was in 1930, when American seamen presented a copy of the United States *Militant*, the Trotskyist Left Opposition paper in the United States, to the secretary of the New South Wales Seamen's Union, who subsequently placed it in the library of the Trades and Labor Council of New South Wales, and

showed it to some who had expressed interest in the ideas of Trotsky."¹

By 1932 a Trotskyist group began to take shape. Between 1932 and 1934 a number of people who were to be leading figures in Australian Trotskyism were expelled from the CPA. One of these was Jack Sylvester, who organized an opposition group within the Communist Party and was expelled in 1932. Another, Joey Boxhall, also known as Joey Boxhorn, had also been a dissident within the CPA and was to be the first national secretary of the first Trotskyist group, the Workers Party (Left Opposition).

A third figure was Ted Tripp, who had been a Communist Party member since 1925 and had been the CPA's first student at the Lenin School in Moscow. Upon returning, he became national secretary of the Friends of the Soviet Union and a member of the Politburo of the CPA. However, he became increasingly critical of the Comintern—particularly its policies in Germany before the Nazi takeover—and established contacts with the Trotskyists at least as early as 1933. He was finally expelled from the CPA in 1934.²

A fourth figure was Nick Origlass, who had been born in Queensland and was of Italian extraction. John Tully has described him as "a singularly dogged fighter, determined to bring the Marxist doctrine of the class struggle and socialism to his fellow workers."³

Finally, there was Laurence (Laurie) Short. The son of a sheepherder in Queensland, he left school at fifteen and moved to Sydney where he joined the Young Communist League.⁴ As a result of participating in a YCL demonstration he spent fourteen days in jail. Then in 1932 he was thrown out of the YCL for supporting Ernie Thornton, a CP leader who had just been expelled. Ironically, Thornton was later reinstated and became the Communist leader and national secretary of the Federated Ironworkers Association, a post from which Short was to oust him many years later, in 1951, after a long court fight over a disputed election.⁵

Deutschman has noted that "it was through activity in the unemployed workers movement that the Left Oppositionists first began to come together in 1931-32." A group of them were active in the Glebe Unemployment Committee, one of the largest unemployed workers' groups in the Sydney area. Joey Boxhall was its most outstanding figure. Laurie Short and Nick Origlass were also active in the organization.

The principal political opposition to Boxhall and his group in the Glebe unemployed workers' organization were the Stalinists of the CPA. When they were unable to gain control of the Glebe paper, *The Bottom Dog*, they began a rival paper, *The Glebe Leader*. They even organized a physical attack on the unemployed workers' movement's office. However, it took more than eighteen months before the Communists were able to gain control of the Glebe unemployed organization, and by that time, the unemployed workers' movement was generally in decline.⁶

The Workers Party (Left Opposition)

The first organization established by the Australian Trotskyists was the Workers Party (Left Opposition). Laurie Short has written that "the first Trotskyist group in Australia was formed in May 1933, at a meeting of about 30 recently expelled members of the Communist Party of Australia, plus a few supporters of the Communist Party, who had never been members of it."⁷

In its early years, the Workers Party was largely confined to Sydney and the surrounding area. It was principally a propaganda group concentrating much of its effort on publication of a monthly newspaper, *The Militant*, and issuing a series of pamphlets. Its first headquarters was the home of the first editor of *The Militant*, Jack Sylvester, in Balmain.

Understandably the Workers Party published many of Trotsky's writings. Dave Deutschman has commented that "Trotsky provided the core of the publications of the

Workers Party, explaining the burning class issues of the day." They also published writings of other international Trotskyist leaders as well as some locally written material dealing with specifically Australian issues. Among the pamphlets published in those years were *Behind the Shooting of Zinoviev*, *What is Happening in the Communist Party of Australia?*, *The Fallacy of the Theory of Social Fascism*, *Trotsky on the Stalinist Zig Zag of the United Front*, Max Shachtman's *The Price of Recognition*, and Trotsky's *I Stake My Life*. The Australian Trotskyists also distributed publications of their U.S. counterparts.

Dave Deutschman has summed up the nature of the Workers party activity in its first years: "They were unable to influence events but they could influence minds. The outstanding activities, therefore, were what were known at the time as the three S's, speaking studying and selling."⁸

The publishing activities of the Trotskyists led them to seek to obtain their own printing machine. Ted Tripp, who by then was editor of *The Militant*, located a used machine priced at fifty pounds, and the Workers Party began a campaign to raise that sum. Apparently Tripp himself contributed much of the money. He donated his winnings from a wager, and he also gave ten pounds which he had been given by what he concluded was the Special Branch of the New South Wales police in an unsuccessful effort to get him to provide information on activities of the Communists.

Shortly after this coup with the police the Trotskyists got their antiquated machine. Perhaps in revenge the police soon afterward seized it, charging that the Workers Party was printing material without including the name of the printer as required by law. However, a judge ordered that it be returned to the Workers Party, arguing that the Trotskyists should only have been warned by the police.⁹

Although the Trotskyists remained a tiny group, they were very much the butt of attacks by the Stalinists. Laurie Short has

commented that the Communist Party "seemed to be alarmed at the existence of even a few Trotskyists."¹⁰ Deutschman has noted that among the epithets addressed to them by the Stalinists were "white guardist pygmies," "insects," "fifth columnists," "saboteurs," "social fascists," and "fascists."¹¹

The Leninist League

The Workers Party succeeded in establishing a small group in Melbourne in 1934, and *The Militant* began to be circulated there. However, there existed another group in that city which had little or no connection with the Workers Party but also had Trotskyist inclinations. This second group was the Leninist League, which was established in 1935 and lasted for about two years. Its principal figure was Dinny Lovegrove, state secretary of the Communist Party in Victoria when he was expelled from the CPA in 1933. Subsequent to his Trotskyist activity he became a leader—at one time, state secretary—of the Australian Labor Party in Victoria.

The Leninist League began publication in August 1935 of a monthly periodical, *The Spark*, which carried material which many years later Dave Deutschman claimed to be "sectarian and at times ultraleft." It also had some activity and influence in the unemployed workers' organizations in Melbourne.

Historians of Australian Trotskyism affiliated with the Socialist Workers Party have raised questions about whether the Leninist League had in fact been a Trotskyist group at all. It was certainly anti-Stalinist, but there was some evidence that it had not supported the concept of democratic centralism. Dinny Lovegrove himself refused "to either deny or agree with my suggestion that he was a Trotskyist," according to Dave Deutschman.¹² In any case, the Leninist League was the most important group in Melbourne during the 1930s which was more or less associated with Trotskyism.

Schisms Among Australian Trotskyists

The Workers Party was not quite four years old when it experienced its first schism. The background for this was described by Nick Origlass. "After an initial period of enthusiasm, the Workers Party disintegrated as a result of a lack of theoretical clarity and disappointment of the members when big results were not rapidly achieved."¹³ The occasion for the first split was a conference of the Workers Party in April 1937, when two separate groups broke away. Eleven months later a third element also separated from the Workers Party.

One dissident group was led by John Anderson, a professor of philosophy at Sydney University. He had migrated to Australia from Scotland in 1927 and had soon become the "theoretical adviser" of the Communist Party of Australia. In 1932 he had been attracted to Trotskyism by Joey Boxhall. Laurie Short has credited him with being one of the two "principal figures" in Australian Trotskyism between 1933 and 1935.¹⁴ Dave Deutschman noted that Anderson "was regarded as the most prestigious figure in the Australian Trotskyist movement and as a public speaker was able to attract very, very large crowds. And, it shouldn't go without saying, that he was also able to donate some much needed funds to the early Australian Trotskyist movement."

According to Deutschman, Professor Anderson's break with Australian Trotskyism was similar to that of Professor James Burnham with its United States counterpart. "If there was somebody who put forward the politics, the anti-Marxist politics of Burnham, perhaps before Burnham himself, it was Professor Anderson in 1937 in his rejection of Marxism, his rejection of dialectical materialism, in a document entitled 'In Defence of Revisionism.'¹⁵

Organizationally more important than the defection of Anderson was that of Ted Tripp, the second editor of *The Militant*. Like Anderson, Tripp and his followers

broke with the Workers Party during the April 1937 conference. They organized a new group, the League of Revolutionary Democracy, which soon changed its name to the Independent Communist League, and published the periodical *Permanent Revolution*. In 1938 Tripp moved to Melbourne where he was active for a short while in the Workers Party group there, but in 1940 abandoned all avowedly Trotskyist activity.

The Independent Communist League, meanwhile, sought reunification with the Workers Party. This was achieved in May 1938 "on the basis of a six point anti-capitalist program." However, on the insistence of Tripp's followers it was agreed to postpone formal affiliation with the International Secretariat of the Movement for the Fourth International.

A third dissident element was a group led by John Wishart, also known as John Royson. They broke away from the Workers Party in March 1938 but sought and received readmission three months later. This time the Wishart group remained in the organization only until its January 1939 conference when they broke away once again in protest of the decision to affiliate formally with the newly established Fourth International. The Wishart group formed a separate organization which used the names of both Revolutionary Workers Party and Revolutionary Workers League. They decided to go underground with the outbreak of World War II and then were readmitted to the main Trotskyist ranks in April 1940. This time they stayed until a conference in November 1941, when the Wishart group finally left the ranks of the official Australian Trotskyist movement for good.¹⁶

Finally out of the Workers Party [by then the Communist League], the followers of Wishart organized as the Revolutionary Workers Party (rwp). For several years the rwp maintained that it was the only real Trotskyist group in Australia, and after the Communist League entered the Australian Labor Party and ended publication of *The Militant* Wishart and his followers began

issuing their own version of that paper as well as a theoretical journal entitled *The Fourth International*, which was edited by Jack Kavanaugh.¹⁷ There is no indication that the Revolutionary Workers Party was ever recognized by the Fourth International as its Australian affiliate.

Meanwhile, one other small split in Australian Trotskyism took place in June 1940. This was when a handful of members left in sympathy with the Shachtmanites in the United States.¹⁸

The Communist League of Australia

At the June 1938 conference of the Workers Party (Left Opposition), the organization's name was changed to Communist League of Australia. Meanwhile, the group had begun to hold public meetings on the Sydney Domain, a large public park, in March 1938, which it continued to run regularly until it was outlawed in June 1940.

The Communist League officially affiliated with the international Trotskyist movement. The December 3, 1938, issue of *The Militant* (which continued to be the League's official organ) published the major decisions of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International which had been held in September. At its January 1939 conference the League decided to affiliate with the Fourth International.¹⁹

At the January 1939 Conference Nick Origlass was chosen as president of the Communist League of Australia. Its new secretary was Gil Roper, a longtime Communist Party leader who had joined the Trotskyists in 1936.²⁰ Laurie Short has said that the three "principal figures" in Australian Trotskyism between 1938 and 1948 were Origlass, Roper, and Short himself.²¹

As the threat of war approached, the Australian Trotskyists strongly opposed the coming conflict. Dave Deutschman has noted that "in June 1939 the Communist League of Australia speakers exposed the ruling class conspiracy to conscript workers for the coming war, and publicly burned a

hated national registry card on the Sydney Domain. . . . True to the Trotskyist tradition, the Communist League proved to be the only organization that stood firmly and consistently against the imperialist war. Not only in its press and public meetings, but on the New South Wales Labor Council, through one of its members, the League fought against all the forces of reaction that were promoting the imperialist war."

Perhaps inevitably, their antiwar attitude brought the illegalization of the Communist League. In June 1940 the Communist Party was declared illegal by Attorney General Hughes. Soon thereafter, John Wishart, addressing one of the League's rallies on the Sydney Domain, "off his own bat . . . challenged, in front of a very large crowd . . . the then Attorney General Billy Hughes to declare the Trotskyists illegal, and within days, Billy Hughes obliged." Their headquarters were raided, and at least two members of the group, Wishart and Gil Roper, were sentenced to short periods in prison.²²

During its short existence, the Communist League apparently had small groups in Melbourne and Brisbane as well as in Sydney. The League was far from being a democratic centralist Bolshevik organization, however. Gil Roper reported on the state of the organization to the International Secretariat of the Fourth International in January 1939 and, according to Dave Deutschman, in that letter Roper said that "the Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne branches largely functioned independently of each other, with a working unity only possible on the basis of a broad program with local autonomy. While the Sydney branch took responsibility for publishing *The Militant*, there was no real effort made by the Melbourne and Brisbane branches to sell, and on one occasion the Melbourne members refused to sell the paper at all because they objected to the attitude of an article in *The Militant* on a big coal strike."²³

Perhaps it was this very looseness of organization which made the Communist League willing to accept within its ranks

new defectors from the Communist Party who did not by any means entirely embrace the ideas of Trotskyism. A number of such figures entered the ranks of the League between 1939 and 1941. The most important of these was Jack Kavanaugh, a founder of the Canadian Communist Party who had moved to Australia in 1925 and had been immediately coopted into the Central Committee of the Australian party. He was secretary general in 1931 when he was first expelled from the CPA. After being readmitted, he was definitively expelled from the CPA in 1934. However, he did not join the Trotskyist ranks until 1940. Subsequently other Trotskyist leaders insisted on referring to him as an "ex-Stalinist," and by the 1950s he was a strong supporter of Nikita Khrushchev, although apparently never again returning to the CPA.²⁴

Entrism in Australia

As was the case with their counterparts in Great Britain, the Australian Trotskyists were confronted not only with the Communist Party, from which most of their early recruits came, but also with the Labor Party. The Australian Labor Party, like that of Britain, was an organization to which trade unions were directly affiliated and was more or less wide open to anyone who cared to join it.

There was apparently no effort during the 1930s by the Australian Trotskyists to follow Trotsky's "French Turn"—entrism—by joining the Labor Party. It was essential, however, that they define their attitude toward the ALP. For electoral purposes, at least, their attitude was one of "critical support." Thus, at the time of the October 1937 general election the Workers Party issued an election manifesto which argued that "the struggle to expose the fallacy and treachery of the ALP policy must begin again. . . . The task of revolutionists is to point out and drive home the lessons of this experience. This consists in an uncompromising strug-

gle against the Australian Labor Party and Stalinist reformism in every field, and above all, in the trade unions. We must unmask their pseudo-leftism, their passive resistance strike policy, their class collaboration, counterposing the method of Leninism of the revolutionary class struggle."

However, in spite of this denunciation the Workers Party manifesto said that "we urge all genuine militants who recognize the futility of parliamentary reformism to join with us in staying with the workers to the extent of voting Labor at this election. Such a vote by a worker who sees the truth of our contentions in this manifesto is in no way an endorsement of the ALP policy, but is a tactic by which sincere revolutionists can insure a bigger possibility for getting a hearing from the workers. . . ."²⁵

In the face of the outlawing of the Communist League in 1940, the members of that group finally decided to carry out the "French Turn" in Australia. This decision was taken at the League's November 1941 conference. Once inside the Labor Party, the Trotskyists formed the Labor Socialist Group and published for several years a newspaper entitled *The Socialist*.²⁶

Dave Deutschman has commented on what happened to the Trotskyists within the Australian Labor Party: "The Trotskyists, operating as Labor Socialist Group, occupied themselves for the next five years in the Labor Party and the trade union movements, making gains in both. A number of Trotskyists in this period became prominent Socialists in the ALP, and as it turned out later on, so submerged were they, lacking a public Trotskyist party, that they disappeared into the ALP altogether." Although after the war the Labor Socialist Group made promises to the U.S. Trotskyists to reestablish an open Trotskyist party, Deutschman had noted that "they never again took on a public face."²⁷

Although getting "lost" in the Australian Labor Party, John Tully has noted that *The Socialist* "attacked conscription and lam-

basted the war for what it was: an imperialist war." It did not have any more use for pacifism than for patriotism. An editorial in the paper declared that "mere opposition to the bosses' conscription plans is not enough. This is an era of universal war and fascism. Pacifism in this era merely delivers the workers into the hands of their enemies. All important questions of the day will be solved by the workers, arms in hand. That is why the workers must step bodily into the political arena with their own programme."²⁸

The Trotskyists in the Balmain Trade Unions

Although aspiring to be the vanguard of the Australian working class the Trotskyists of the 1930s and 1940s only achieved some degree of influence in the trade union movement in one local area. This was in the Balmain branch of the Federated Ironworkers Association (FIA).

Balmain, a suburb of Sydney, was long a center of the shipbuilding and repair industry in Australia. One of the first installations, Mort's Dock, was set up in 1854. It continued to be a major drydock until it was finally closed in the mid-1960s. Another major one was the Cockatoo Dock of the Vickers Company. The industry was very depressed during the 1930s. Only with the outbreak of World War II did the Balmain facilities become exceedingly busy, working overtime in repairing vessels damaged as a consequence of hostilities.

The shipbuilding workers had traditionally been very militant. The first local of the Federated Ironworkers Association—by the 1940s one of the country's largest unions—was established in Balmain at the beginning of the century. Similarly, one of the first locals of the Australian Labor Party was located in the town.

At the advent of the Great Depression the Balmain union and the FIA in general were under very conservative leadership. Under

the spur of the difficulties of the crisis there was an upsurge of militancy among the iron workers which was led by members of the Communist Party of Australia. As a consequence Ernest Thornton emerged as national secretary of the FIA in 1936.²⁹

John Tulley has observed that "under the leadership of the C.P.A. and the dynamic, although already completely Stalinized Thornton, the Ironworkers Union was changed from a rather loose, federated body, with something of a tradition of local democracy, into a strongly centralized body in which the national leadership was able to dictate to the local leaders, and the rank and file. Independent shop floor activity was anathema to the Stalinists, and according to witnesses of that time, they consciously modelled the organizational structure of the unions under their control on the distorted version of 'democratic centralism' that operated inside the C.P.A. . . ."³⁰

Only the Balmain local of the FIA was not thoroughly controlled by the CPA—there was a strong current of discontent with the Stalinists. John Tulley has noted that the "Trotskyists were to provide the leadership for an extraordinary rank-and-file revolt of ironworkers, backed up by most other waterfront unionists, against the Stalinist F.I.A. officials. The Trotskyists were the catalyst needed to cause an explosive reaction that flowed from the bitterness felt by shipyard workers. . . ."³¹

Not entirely by coincidence several leading Trotskyists were working in Balmain by the early 1940s. Nick Origlass and Laurie Short were ironworkers at Mort's Dock and Cockatoo Dockyard, respectively, Jack Murphy and Jack Sponberg were members of the Boilermakers Society, and Izzy Wyner was a ship painter and docker.³² The Trotskyists strongly opposed the "class collaborationist" position adopted by the Stalinist leaders of the FIA after the German attack on the Soviet Union. They put out local sheets attacking Communist sabotage of local strikes.³³ In 1944 they led the successful op-

position to giving up the traditional paid holiday on Anniversary Day.³⁴

Nick Origlass and Laurie Short established the Balmain Workers Social Club, which published *The Rising Tide*. This periodical "contained articles analysing the war from a socialist point of view, industrial news and social news."³⁵ In November 1944 the union unit at Mort's Dock at a mass meeting adopted a motion introduced by Nick Origlass which called for unpegging of wages by the government, tying basic wages to the cost of living and immediate establishment of the forty-hour week.³⁶

The struggle of the Trotskyists against the Stalinist control of the Balmain local of the FIA came to a head in the last months of the war. In February 1945 the Stalinists refused to allow union payment of lost wages for Origlass for a day he spent on union business, as was the custom.³⁷ Shortly afterward, Origlass and other members of the Mort's Dock boilershop committee were suspended because of holding a meeting during working hours, but were restored by a quick strike.

In March Origlass and seven other Mort's Dock ironworkers were brought up on charges in the union, with Origlass being suspended as steward in the boiler shop. Although the workers there refused to elect a replacement, the Stalinist union leaders announced three new delegates from Mort's Dock. This provoked a general strike on Mort's Dock on April 16. Two weeks later this became a general strike of all ironworkers in Balmain.³⁸

Finally, a meeting of the full Balmain branch of the FIA on May 22, 1945, voted to depose the pro-Stalinist executive committee and elect a new one, on which Nick Origlass was assistant secretary. As a consequence of this change in leadership the strikers voted to go back to work, which they did on May 25.³⁹ The Stalinists did not accept this fait accompli, and organized their own branch in Balmain. On August 29, 1945, Judge O'Meara of the Arbitration Court up-

held the legitimacy of the branch led by Origlass and his friends. When the National Council of the FIA "suspended" the Balmain branch executive, the maneuver failed because the New South Wales Labor Council accepted the branch delegates' credentials.⁴⁰

However, in 1947 there were negotiations between the FIA national leadership and the Balmain local, in which the president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Albert Monk, participated. It was finally agreed to merge the Balmain branch into the sub-branch of Sydney waterfront workers. In elections in the new unit the Balmain group won by a 3-2 vote.⁴¹ In spite of this final victory the influence of the Trotskyists in the trade union movement of Balmain soon disappeared.

Laurie Short quit the Trotskyist movement in 1948. Many years later, Short observed that "I remained a Trotskyist for some years, slowly getting disillusioned by them until the age of about 32 when I broke finally and irrevocably with Marxism. I gradually came to the conclusion that our Western-style pluralist, parliamentary democracy with all its faults is preferable to totalitarian societies like the Soviet Union. Ours is much less awful than all the others."⁴²

Although quitting Trotskyism, Short did not cease his union activities. As an Australian Labor Party leader, he finally wrested control of the Federated Ironworkers Association from the Communists in 1951, when a federal court declared that elections had been rigged by the Thornton administration, and Laurie Short was declared to be national secretary of the FIA. He continued to hold that position until his retirement on December 31, 1982, at which time a Sydney newspaper called him "one of the most powerful people in Australia."⁴³

End of First Phase of Australian Trotskyism

By the late 1940s the Australian Trotskyists lost most of whatever ground they had

gained during the previous fifteen years. Certainly the reasons for this included the emergence of a general postwar prosperity which made it possible for large numbers of Australian workers to improve their standard of living, and the onset of the Cold War, which generated widely held suspicions of any groups which seemed—even to the degree that was true of the Trotskyists—to be apologists for the Soviet Union. There was a marked drift to the right in Australian politics in the postwar period.

Dave Deutschman has reflected on some of the other reasons for the decline of Trotskyism after World War II. "They were a small group of talented mass workers and class struggle militants, many of them quite exceptionally dogged and honest people. Without a party with which to stand up to the great historical buffetings, many of them drifted away. As a result, at the end of the '40s, the Australian Trotskyist movement was smaller and more isolated than ever. It was cut off from the main stream of workingclass life, left high and dry where the waves of the class struggle had reached it before receding."⁴⁴

The Australian Section of the Fourth International did not entirely disappear. Nick Origlass remained its most prestigious leader. It published a periodical, *International*. In 1954 Origlass wrote to the Socialist Workers Party of the United States to inform them that after carefully studying James Cannon's Open Letter to the World Trotskyist Movement and other material issued by the International Committee, the Australian Section had decided to continue its backing of the International Secretariat, led by Michel Pablo. However, in 1956-57 a small group did break away to support the International Committee, and it published its own version of *The Socialist*. It reunited with the Origlass group in 1960.⁴⁵

The Australian Trotskyists obtained some recruits as a consequence of the events of 1956—Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress and the Hungarian uprising

and its suppression. A number of members of the Communist Party of Australia, particularly younger people, left in disgust, some of them joining the Trotskyist ranks.⁴⁶ However, their number was not sufficient to increase the size or influence of the Trotskyist movement.

The Trotskyists also made some gains as a result of the beginning of the radicalization of university youth in the early 1960s. John Percy has noted that these gains were particularly evident at Sydney University. He observed that "these people had been active around the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which had been set up in Sydney University where the campus milieu hadn't quite yet emerged from the Dark Days of the Cold War, and others were active in the ALP Club on Campus. . . ."⁴⁷

The Australian Trotskyists became part of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International when it was formed in 1963. Two years later, when Michel Pablo broke away from USEC to form his own international group, the Australian Trotskyists split. At a conference early in 1967 the majority of the group decided to leave USEC along with Pablo. According to John Percy, the vote was very close, something like 13-12. Percy also noted that it was generally the older people who sided with Nick Origlass in quitting the United Secretariat.⁴⁸

The Origlass Group

The Origlass group continued to exist after the split, but it is clear that they did not seriously try to establish a Trotskyist party. They were to a large degree an ingrown group. Percy has claimed that "often the activity consisted of soirees every month at Nick's place, where people listened to a several hour monologue by Nick Origlass."⁴⁹

Yet the activities of the group were certainly more extensive than that. It continued to publish *International*, which included many translations of articles by

Pablo. The group also worked within the Australian Labor Party, with Origlass being particularly active in the party in the Balmain area. He was even elected mayor of the suburban town of Lechhardt and gained a certain notoriety when, clad in his robes of office, he led a demonstration against the building of a freeway.⁵⁰

In the late 1960s Nick Origlass came into conflict with right-wing Labor Party elements in the Balmain area. This brought his expulsion from the Labor Party, whereupon he ran a campaign as an Independent Labor candidate and came close to defeating the official ALP nominee.

Some of the old-time Trotskyist trade unionists remained with Nick Origlass in the 1965 split, but as time went on most of them abandoned their Trotskyist allegiance. John Percy has noted that some after being "active as Trotskyists in the trade unions, [became] less and less Trotskyists and more and more just trade unionists." Others became Communists or Communist sympathizers. Percy added that "the great majority of those who supported Nick dropped out of politics altogether."⁵¹

George Novack, the United States Trotskyist leader who met and talked extensively with Nick Origlass during a visit to Australia in the late 1970s, came to the conclusion that the Origlass group had been reduced largely to a few personal friends of Origlass.⁵²

The Revival of Australian Trotskyism

Australian Trotskyism had reached its nadir by the mid-1960s. In the years that followed it was to revive but, in its new phase, to be split into several competing groups. The largest of these would gain a distinctive place for itself in the history of International Trotskyism in the middle 1980s by repudiating the ideas of Trotsky and withdrawing from the ranks of the movement.

Trotskyism in the 1960s Antiwar Movement

The revival of Australian Trotskyism came as a consequence of the youth revolt of the 1960s, particularly the movement against the Vietnam War. Although there were some connections between this new Trotskyist movement and the older one, it consisted mainly of young people who had no previous contact with radical politics.

At the time of the 1965 split, the minority of older Trotskyists, who continued to support the United Secretariat, wrote to the International explaining the origins of the schism in Australian Trotskyism. They received a reply from Pierre Frank, and among other advice he suggested they should continue to function as a group and bring out a publication. They were not able to do either of these things, and there was no further contact between the Australian Trotskyists and the United Secretariat for about four years.¹

Two members of the 1965 minority did continue to be active in left-wing politics—Ian McDougal and Bob Gould. They had both been leaders of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Sydney in the early 1960s and were largely responsible for converting this in 1965 into the Vietnam Action

Campaign, which Percy has said "was the first real organization here to get going to mobilize people against the Vietnam War."²

About the same time as the split among the Trotskyists there was an influx of members into the radical groups at Sydney University. These groups were the Labor Club, at the time controlled by the Stalinists, the Australian Labor Party Club (ALP), and the Fabian Society, made up of right-wing Labor supporters. By 1964 the ALP Club was already controlled by Origlass Trotskyists, including N. MacDougal, Sylvia Hale, Paul Greenland, and Peter Templeton.³

Most of the youngsters who entered these clubs had little or no political background, although some of them were children of Communist Party members. The Stalinists dominated the Labor Club largely because of the political innocence of most of the rank-and-file members of the group.

It was at the Australian Student Labor Federation Conference of May 1965 that there began to emerge a Trotskyist group at Sydney University. That meeting in Canberra was marked by an antiwar demonstration, as a result of which a number of the participants were jailed overnight. Those incarcerated included Bob Gould who, although no longer a student, made it "a habit of going along to the ASLF conference each year as did a few other perennial student activists. . . ."⁴ Subsequently Gould led the anti-Stalinist group in the conference and won the support of some of the Sydney University students there, most notably Percy.

Early in 1966 the students who had been influenced by Gould took control of the Labor Club and changed its name to the Socialist Club. Percy became its secretary and editor of its magazine, *The Forum*. He and other students who had joined forces with him also entered into contact with three ex-members of the Origlass Trotskyist group: Roger Barnes, Sylvia Hale, and Tony Kelly. These three had started a magazine, *Comment*, and set up a printing business. The students helped them publish their periodical,

and subsequently the three old-time Trotskyists printed a number of publications which the young people began to put out.⁵

The emerging group of young Trotskyists generally joined the Australian Labor Party, but "there was so much happening outside the Labor Party and in the antiwar movement, we didn't go all that much into the Labor Party at that time," according to Percy.⁶ Among other things they attempted to penetrate the Unity Youth League, the youth organization of the Communist Party, which was then in a state of ferment. For a while the Trotskyists had a faction within the UYL which they oriented. They failed to gain control of the UYL, and so set about organizing a separate group under their own leadership.⁷

Meanwhile, the young Trotskyists had established their own informal organization. It started to publish a periodical, *Perspectives*, which put out "reprints of overseas Trotskyist articles, analysis of what was happening in the Labor Party, the CP and so on. . . ."⁸

The broader organization established by the Trotskyists was designed to be a "radical youth organization." They got a headquarters for the group in the center of Sydney and adopted a name, Screw. Percy has said that "there were two interpretations of what this meant. . . . The first interpretation was that it was Society for the Cultivation of Rebellion Everywhere. If you were a little more political, it was the Sydney Committee for Revolution and Emancipation of the Working class."⁹

At its inception Screw undoubtedly reflected the "youth culture" characteristic of the time. Drugs as well as radical politics were popular among its members although the ideological leaders would apparently have nothing to do personally with the drug culture.

In November 1967 the name of the group was changed to Resistance. John Percy has noted that "we had to fight a rearguard action with anarchists in the organization who

thought that Screw was just right for their conception of the organization. We won the day at a Screw meeting and changed the name to Resistance, and pressed it a little more in the political direction."¹⁰

Five months later, in April 1968, Resistance became a membership organization, "one further step on the road to structuring ourselves," as Percy observed. It published regular newsletters and put out mailings of the Vietnam Action Campaign, which mounted to 11,000 copies at one point. The group issued a number of pamphlets and produced about twenty-five different posters. They held weekend seminars on Marxism, Che Guevara, and radical youth movements. Percy noted that "we participated as a group in many anti-Vietnam and anti-conscription demonstrations. We helped picket, collect money and produce posters for the strike of junior postal workers."¹¹

One pamphlet issued by Resistance, "How Not to Join the Army," brought about a police raid on their headquarters. They had received advance notice of the raid and so had mobilized newspaper journalists and TV cameramen to witness the event. The result was that "it gave the bookshop a real boost. The Third World Bookshop, where you can get this seditious literature. It was thousands and thousands of dollars worth of free publicity. . . ."¹²

The International Marxist League

Establishment

In May 1969 the Trotskyist core within the Resistance leadership organized the International Marxist League (IML). Thirty people were present at its founding meeting, which decided to issue a statement which read in part: "Dear Comrade, A meeting of revolutionary Socialists was held last . . . May 17, and those present resolved to constitute themselves as a political faction. The viewpoint would be generally Trotskyist and sympathetic to the Fourth International, formed by such organizations as the JCR in

France, the Socialist Workers Party in America, and the International Marxist Group in Britain. It would also be able to encompass comrades who might have some theoretical differences." The last statement was added, according to Percy, on the insistence of Bob Gould, who had doubts about establishing a frankly Trotskyist organization.¹³

The first meeting also decided to undertake responsibility for continuing the publication of *Socialist Perspectives* and to establish a similar group in Canberra, where Ian McDougal had recently moved. It also elected Percy as convener of the organization, and Megan Sharpe as international correspondence secretary.¹⁴

A week later the second meeting of the organization took place. There "we adopted a draft program which was fairly rudimentary, just ten or eleven points, short paragraphs. . . ." They also adopted the name International Marxist League, copying it from the International Marxist Group, USEC's British affiliate, to which Megan Sharpe and her husband had belonged before their recent return from Great Britain.¹⁵

Factional Struggle Within the IML

Virtually from the inception of the IML a factional struggle broke out within its ranks. On one side was Bob Gould, who had come out of the older Trotskyist movement and was cautious about launching a new affiliate of the United Secretariat, favoring instead a broader kind of organization through which the convinced Trotskyists could "educate" other members, looking toward the ultimate (but not proximate) establishment of a full-fledged Trotskyist party. On the other side were a number of the new recruits from the antiwar movement, led particularly by John and James Percy. They favored establishment as soon as possible of a declared Trotskyist organization which, although inevitably small, would become the avowed affiliate of International Trotskyism in Australia.

Soon after the establishment of the IML

Barry Shephard, the U.S. representative at USEC headquarters in Paris, made a visit to Australia on the way home from the Ninth World Congress of the United Secretariat. Both Gould and his opponents presented their points of view to Shephard, and although he did not overtly take sides at that time Shephard's visit did establish contacts between the IML and the headquarters of the international movement, and in doing so tended to strengthen the hand of the anti-Gould faction.¹⁶

One immediate result of the Shephard visit was the decision of the IML to elect an executive committee in place of the mere convenor and international secretary. Gould favored a large committee and the freedom of any member who cared to do so to participate in its meetings; the Percy group favored a smaller working executive, and they carried the day. However, when elections for the committee were held, Gould obtained a majority.¹⁷

During the latter months of 1969 the anti-war struggle took up most of the Trotskyists' time and the faction fight languished. It was rekindled as the result of an invitation from the Young Socialist Alliance, the youth organization of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, to pay the expenses of a fraternal delegate from the Australian Trotskyists to the upcoming YSA convention. Gould proposed that one Hardin Thompson, of his faction, be named, while his opponents suggested that John Percy should be the delegate. Percy was selected. He later wrote to Barry Shephard that upon his return to Australia, "I was perhaps, yes, a raving YSAer, very impressed with things, very impressed with the Socialist Workers Party and I learned an awful lot."¹⁸

John Percy returned from the United States with certain ideas for reorganizing Resistance and in effect converting it into a Trotskyist youth group. As a consequence, the struggle within the IML spilled over into Resistance, where both factions sought to line up people who were not members of IML.

The proposals put forward by Percy and supported by his group within the IML and Resistance included tightening up the organizational structure of Resistance with the election of an executive committee, the payment of regular dues by members, and the establishment of an educational program among members. He also proposed committing it ideologically to Trotskyist positions, which Percy himself many years later summed up thus: "for socialism and workers' control, immediate withdrawal of troops and so on, support for the Vietnamese revolution and all national liberation struggles and so on, against the bureaucracies in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China, and support for the struggle for socialist democracy in those countries."¹⁹

These suggestions aroused strong opposition from Gould and his supporters. They urged a much looser form of organization and opposed committing Resistance ideologically.²⁰ The upshot was the formation of two factions within the organization in preparation for a meeting on February 14, 1970, to reach a decision on the issue. That session lasted seven and a half hours, and the Percy forces finally carried the day with a vote of about 2-1 on the various motions. That group also received a substantial majority on the new executive committee of Resistance.²¹

Meanwhile, the struggle also continued within the IML. Although neither the League nor its executive committee had met for three months, a meeting of the executive was called by the Gould forces and it passed a motion censuring the activities of John and James Percy within Resistance. This action provoked the issuance of a leaflet by the Percy brothers stating their position in favor of converting the IML into a "proper" Trotskyist organization and denying Gould's charge that they were trying to convert Resistance into a "proto-party."²²

After their defeat in Resistance the Gould forces called a full meeting of the IML. That session confirmed the vote of censure against the Percy brothers. Bob Gould then

introduced a motion to the effect that "the IML recognizes the existence of two factions and proposes to split the group for the time period of six months into two separate groups. There will be no IML meetings during this period, but a parity committee of the two factions will be set up for the purpose of calling a reunification conference at the end of this time." This motion was passed by a very small majority.²³

For all practical purposes, this meant the end of the International Marxist League. The Gould group maintained their identity for a time. They published a newspaper, *Keep Left*. However, by the late 1970s the organization had apparently lapsed, although some members of the group were still active in the Australian Labor Party and the unions of the New South Wales area.²⁴

From Socialist Review Group to Socialist Workers Party

The Percy group also continued to function, now as a separate organization. In May 1970 they launched a periodical, *Socialist Review*, and from this journal they took the name Socialist Review Group. In the first issue an introductory editorial recounted something of the history of Trotskyism in Australia, including the 1965 split in its ranks. It commented that "the remaining supporters of the Fourth International continued to work in small groups or as individuals, explaining and developing their views, winning others to their position, and playing a part in all the mass activities of the Left. During the last three months there has been a major regroupment of the supporters of the Fourth International, with a large branch in Sydney, and small groups in Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra. This group now has a larger membership than all of the supporters of *International*, other small bodies and noisy individuals claiming to be Trotskyists."²⁵

In fact, the principal strength of the Socialist Review Group was still in the Sydney region. In Melbourne, although they had

"gotten in touch with a few individuals, it wasn't organized properly as a group." In Adelaide a somewhat more substantial branch had been established by Carl Maynard, Bill Claven, and Ben Austin, who had been coleaders with the Percy brothers of the anti-Gould forces in Sydney. In Canberra Ian McDougal, one of the younger veterans of the older Trotskyist movement, was the principal organizer of the Socialist Review Group.²⁶ Efforts to involve Roger Barnes, Sylvia Hale, and Tony Kelly, also former members of the earlier Trotskyist movement, did not flourish; after first being associated with the Socialist Review Group they withdrew because of the Group's opposition to "deep entry" into the Australian Labor Party.²⁷

On August 28–29, 1970, Resistance held a national conference. That meeting confirmed the break with the Gouldites and converted the organization into the Socialist Youth Alliance. John Percy later noted that the meeting "adopted a number of documents, a political program, elected a national leadership, and set about the task of building a proper Socialist youth organization." It also decided to begin publication of a new periodical, *Direct Action*.²⁸

John Percy summed up the further evolution of the Socialist Review Group: "If you ask when the Socialist Workers Party was founded, well the party was founded at the beginning of 1976 when we changed our name from Socialist Workers League to Socialist Workers Party. The Socialist Workers League was founded at the beginning of 1972. But really, the Socialist Review Group was the direct precursor of the Socialist Workers League. . . . The first conference of the Socialist Review Group was the founding conference of the Socialist Workers League. . . ."²⁹

USEC Factionalism in Australia in the 1970s

During the 1970s the USEC-oriented Trotskyists of Australia suffered the conse-

quences of the bitter controversy then under way within the United Secretariat. There existed groups associated with both the International Majority Tendency, led by the Europeans Ernest Mandel, Livio Maitan, and Pierre Frank, and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction (LTF), associated with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

The Socialist Workers League (and subsequently Socialist Workers Party) was aligned with the Leninist Trotskyist Faction. At least as early as 1970 another organization, the Labor Action Group (LAG), centering principally in Brisbane, was established by people sympathizing with the International Majority Tendency. By 1971 both it and the Socialist Review Group (soon to be the Socialist Workers League) had been recognized as sympathizing organizations of USEC.

Early in 1972 the first effort was made to unite the two USEC groups. LAG went out of existence and its members joined the Socialist Workers League, into the leadership of which some LAG people were co-opted. However, this fusion lasted only about eight months and in August 1972 a new split took place resulting in the formation of the Communist League.³⁰

The two organizations continued their separate existence until early 1976. It was not until the beginning of reconciliation between the IMF and LTF within USEC that serious steps were taken to reunite the two Australian groups associated with the United Secretariat. In 1976 a minority of the Communist League broke away from that organization and joined the Socialist Workers Party (which the SWL had become). In the following year, lengthy negotiations and considerable cooperation in issuing a Joint Discussion Bulletin and holding Joint Central Committee meetings resulted in agreement to hold a unity conference in January 1978.³¹ The unity achieved at that time continued for half a decade, until entirely new grounds for splitting arose from a quarrel between the Socialist Workers parties of Australia and the United States and from

the drift of the Australian party away from Trotskyism.

Democratic Centralist Nature of the SWP

By 1977 the Australian Socialist Workers Party had become an orthodox Trotskyist "democratic centralist" organization. At its Fifth National Conference in January 1977 it adopted a resolution on "Organizational Principles of the SWP," in many ways like a similar document adopted by the SWP of the United States a dozen years before. It, together with the party's constitution, defined the nature of the organization.

The 1977 resolution provided that "the revolutionary combat party has the right to regulate *all* its affairs, either by means of majority vote or by delegating decisions to the elected leaderships." It further provided that "centralism is united action, the principle that *all* the political activity of party members is carried out under the overall direction of the party. There are no exceptions to this rule apart from those which the party itself may explicitly decide upon." In elaborating on this theme the resolution spelled out that "all political collaboration with nonmembers of the party shall be under the direction and control of the governing bodies of the party."³²

The "democratic centralist" nature of the SWP was also elaborated upon with regard to discussions of party policies and positions. Article IV, Section 7 of its constitution provided that "questions decided by the National Conference may be the subject of new discussions only when such discussion is formally authorized by the national governing bodies of the party or in the established preconference discussion period." This point was elaborated on by the 1977 resolution's insistence that "the party is therefore entitled to regulate the time, form and limits of its internal discussions. The party is not a debating society, but a revolutionary combat party, which discusses in order to act with the united force of all its members."

To avoid abuse of this rule by the "governing bodies," however, the party constitution provided that a special conference could be called on the demand of "one third of the membership in a vote on motions presented to branch meetings within a two months period."³³

The party's rules did provide for the organization of tendencies and even factions during discussion periods. The 1977 document said that "a faction which is publicly declared to the party as a whole, which attempts to persuade the party rather than manipulate it behind the backs of the membership, which conducts its efforts completely within the framework prescribed by the national conference and authorized party bodies, and which gives the party the same degree of loyalty that is expected from every party member, is thoroughly in keeping with the norms of a democratic centralist organization."³⁴

Evolution and Activities of the SWP

The Socialist Workers Party grew considerably in the years following its formal establishment, both in terms of numbers and of the geographical distribution of its membership. By 1984 it had party organizations and headquarters in Adelaide, Brisbane, Burnie, Canberra, Hobart, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth, Sydney, and Wollongong.³⁵

In November 1983 the party leadership announced that "for three years the party had experienced steady growth—an overall increase of 70 percent from February 1981 to September 1983." The report added that "we have maintained a cadre school in which dozens of comrades have had the benefit of sixteen weeks of full-time study."³⁶

At the time of the January 1984 Socialist Education Conference organized by the party it was announced that 420 people were in attendance, an increase of 35 percent over the previous year. Some 51 percent of those

attending were members of the SWP or its youth group, Resistance. They included members of forty-two different trade unions.

The report on this conference commented that "the SWP and Resistance made the most of their opportunities in 1983." It added that "during the year a group of Turks in Melbourne, members of the organization Revolutionary Path, fused with the SWP," and "that a similar group in Sydney had also decided to join the party."³⁷

No reliable figures are available concerning the total membership of the Socialist Workers Party. However, one unfriendly source claimed in the summer of 1983 that the Melbourne branch, with 65 members, had "one third of the entire membership."³⁸ It seems likely that the actual membership was substantially higher than that indicated by this source. Mick Armstrong of the rival International Socialists estimated in May 1983 that the SWP had between 250 and 300 members.³⁹

The membership engaged in a wide variety of different activities. The party followed the so-called "industrial turn" prescribed by the 1979 World Conference of the United Secretariat, that is, having the party members get jobs, particularly in industry, and become active in the appropriate unions. By mid-1982 the leadership of the SWP concluded that the "turn to industry" had been completed, with 81 percent of the membership either employed in industry or looking for industrial jobs. Critics of the leadership argued that a substantial part of the party membership was, in fact, employed in white-collar jobs and other nonindustrial occupations.⁴⁰

About the time of a completion of the industrial turn, the SWP leadership made a decision to participate in union elections with their own slates, or tickets worked out with other far left organizations. A party resolution proclaimed that "now is the time for the party to step up its efforts at linking up with and bringing together the initial

nuclei of the class-struggle left wing, those militant sections of the working class that are looking for solutions to the present crisis on the basis of class-struggle unionism and a fight against the bureaucracy of both 'left' and right varieties."

In the following period SWP slates were organized in a number of union elections. These included locals in the auto and steel industries.⁴¹ The Socialist Workers Party also participated in general elections. The high point of this activity was in the election of March 1983, which brought the Australian Labor Party back to power after a considerable period. In that campaign the SWP "fielded a total of thirty-eight candidates, produced more than half a million national campaign leaflets, and printed 80,000 posters." The party paper, *Direct Action*, of March 15, 1983, reported that the SWP candidates had received 41,803 votes, which represented 0.5 percent of the total, but in those districts in which it had candidates it received an average of 1,100 votes, amounting to 1.5 percent.

In that campaign the SWP called for first preference votes for its nominees but for second preference votes—under the country's proportional representation electoral system—for nominees of the Australian Labor Party.⁴²

The attitude of the SWP toward the Labor Party in the 1983 election was put forth in an article "Fraser Must Go!" appearing in the periodical of the party's youth organization some months before the poll. It said that "a Labor government with socialist policies would be capable of ruling in the interests of the majority and implementing these demands. The present Labor party leaders and trade union officials have been pushed to take action over workers' demands in recent months. . . . However, these labor movement leaders have also shown that they aren't really capable of mounting a sustained campaign to defend workers' levels or of organizing resistance to the war drive." But the paper concluded that "the Labor

Party is the only real alternative for workers in Australia today. . . ."⁴³

By late 1984 the SWP's attitude toward the Australian Labor Party had altered drastically, in part reflecting the SWP's drift away from its traditional Trotskyist orientation. In October 1984 the National Committee adopted as its own a report made to it by Jim Percy, which set forth the party's new electoral posture. Percy argued that over the years the SWP had been wrong in urging a vote for Australian Labor Party candidates in places where it did not run its own. It had been led into doing this by its putting too much emphasis on the fact that the ALP was based on the trade unions even though it had a bourgeois program. Since the ALP in fact represented the strongest block to a socialist revolution in Australia it had to be destroyed, and the SWP had been wrong to contribute to illusions about what could be accomplished by victory of the Labor Party.

Insofar as the 1984 election itself was concerned, Percy professed to see the emergence of the new Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP) as a possible beginning of the breakup of the Australian Labor Party. Both because of that, and because the SWP strongly supported the "one-issue" around which the NDP was organized, the SWP should support NDP candidates—mainly running for the Senate. In addition, in some constituencies the SWP should have its own candidates; and in the State of South Australia should participate along with the Stalinist Socialist Party of Australia and several smaller left groups in a coalition campaign.⁴⁴

The NDP in fact received between seven and eight percent of the total vote. The SWP's nine candidates received between one and five percent in the constituencies in which they ran.⁴⁵ The united front ticket in South Australia got fewer votes than the individual participating parties had received before.⁴⁶

At a postelection conference of the NDP its elected senator, Jo Vallentine, and several other top leaders of the group walked out.

In doing so, they denounced the Socialist Workers Party's alleged efforts to "take over" the new party.⁴⁷

Another center of party activity was the issuance and distribution of its publications. It was reported in May 1984 that 6,133 copies of the party's weekly, *Direct Action*, were being distributed. By far the largest numbers were being placed in Sydney and Melbourne.⁴⁸ The SWP maintained a book and pamphlet publishing enterprise, Pathfinder Press, which in 1982 was distributing among other things works by Engels and Trotsky, and publications on Cuba, sexism, and atomic energy problems.⁴⁹

Positions and Alliances of the Socialist Workers Party

In general, the Australian SWP in the late 1970s and early 1980s took positions similar to those being enunciated by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. However, there were some issues on which this was clearly not the case.

In internal Australian politics, the SWP was highly critical of the Australian Labor Party government which came to power early in 1983. It was particularly opposed to the so-called "social compact" worked out between the Labor government of Prime Minister Bob Hawke and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). Its attitude was put forward in a slogan which took up most of the front page of the May 2, 1984 issue of *Direct Action*: "Hawke's Accord is a Dead End!" Similarly, an editorial in the May 16, 1984, issue dealt with "Labor's Job Failure."

The SWP was also critical of the foreign policy of the Hawke government. A lead editorial in the April 11, 1984, issue of *Direct Action* denounced "Hawke's Cold War" and attacked a leaked official document, "the Strategic Basis of Australian Defense Policy," which called for a "forward defence" of the country.

The party strongly supported in its publications the rights of the immigrant workers

and particularly of the aboriginal population. For instance, the May 16, 1984, issue of *Direct Action* carried articles denouncing alleged anti-Asian bigotry of the Liberal Party.⁵⁰ The issue of February 15, 1984, carried articles protesting widespread unemployment among the aborigines, inadequate educational facilities for the aborigines, as well as one on the Turkish migrants struggle for child care.⁵¹ The February 22, 1984, issue carried an analysis of a Hawke government bill on aborigines' land rights and a story on aboriginal occupation of land which they argued belonged rightly to them.⁵²

Virtually every issue of *Direct Action* carried more or less extensive news about trade union struggles in various parts of the country. However, there was very little indication of direct SWP participation in these struggles.

On international issues the SWP paid extensive attention to the conflicts going on in Central America, strongly supporting the guerrilla war in El Salvador and the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. It also continued to support the Iranian Revolution although critical of the Khomeini regime's suppression of its opponents. An official statement of the position of the Socialist Workers Party on Iran in mid-1984 observed that "the revolutionary overthrow of the IRP regime is not a real possibility right now," and criticized the Mujahedeen for "ultraleft adventure" in having attempted such an overthrow. It added that "the tack is to prepare for this by driving forward the anti-imperialist struggle" and listed a number of "main axes of this struggle." These included broadening democratic rights, "developing the self-organization of the working class," land reform, rights of minorities, rights for women, and "arming the masses of workers and peasants to defend their revolution." The document cited an earlier SWP statement of 1981 to the effect that "the masses of workers and peasants are still undefeated, and how much further they are able to go will in some part depend on the extent of the support and solidarity they receive from

the working people around the world. . . . The Iranian people still need our solidarity."⁵³

On some matters the Australian SWP took a more pro-Soviet position than did the United Secretariat as a whole. Early in 1984 its periodical carried a two-piece article, "Behind the Steady Growth of the Soviet Economy," which was highly laudatory of the achievements of the Soviet planners.⁵⁴

The SWP also presented a more friendly attitude toward the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan than was customary in USEC publications. In an article on the subject early in 1982 *Direct Action* said:

Soviet withdrawal now would in all likelihood lead to a quick victory of the counter-revolutions. . . . The aim of all supporters of the Afghan revolution and all supporters of Afghanistan's right of self-determination should be to help create the conditions in which Soviet troops will no longer be needed to defend the gains and lives of the Afghan workers and peasants. In the first place and above all, this means campaigning against imperialist arming and financing of the counter-revolution, against the Pakistani dictatorship's providing of sanctuary for the guerrillas, and against the US military build-up in the region. . . .⁵⁵

One issue which caused concern on the part of the United Secretariat was the Australian SWP's alignment with a group of Croatian immigrants, the Croatian Movement for Statehood (HDP). An article by a member of the HDP group which appeared in *Direct Action* said that HDP "was formed in 1981 around the ideas of Bruno Busic one of the central leaders of the Croatian Spring who was executed in 1978 because of his political beliefs. The HDP seeks an independent Croatia in which all national minorities have equal rights and opportunities. More than ever before we are aware that we can achieve our goal through the continued struggle of a united people and, as Marx put it, we have nothing to lose but our chains."⁵⁶ The Au-

gust 1983 issue of *Direct Action* carried a four-page supplement on "the Croatian national struggle."

Opponents of the SWP claimed that the HDP had its origins in the Ustashi movement which had dominated Croatia during the Nazi occupation period of World War II. The SWP's association with the HDP brought protests from some people in the Australian Labor Party and other groups with which the Socialist Workers Party had until then had friendly relations.⁵⁷

The alignment with the HDP brought a reaction from Ernest Mandel of the United Secretariat. Although no details of the document were published, a letter which had some circulation within the SWP was sent by Mandel to the Australian SWP leadership complaining to some degree about the SWP-HDP relationship.⁵⁸ Late in 1984 a segment of the HDP broke away to form the Socialist Party of Croatia. That group received considerable favorable publicity from the SWP.⁵⁹

Another alliance developed by the Socialist Workers Party in the early 1980s was that with the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), the pro-Moscow faction of the Australian Communist movement. An article in *Direct Action* explained the purposes of cooperation between the SWP and the SPA: "The ALP-ACTU prices and income accord is a mechanism for attacking workers' wages and conditions in the interest of the capitalist class. . . . That is why the SWP—along with the SPA—is giving its full support to the campaign around the Manifesto of Social Rights. . . ."

This article by Dave Holmes went on to say that "the other central area of agreement between SWP and the SPA is over the need to combat the imperialist war drive spearheaded by Washington. A key task in this fight is to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attacks and to refute the anti-communist, and anti-Soviet hysteria whipped up by the capitalist media. . . ."⁶⁰

By early 1985 the SWP was exploring the idea of a broader regroupment of the far left, including various factions and schismatic

groupings not only of the SPA but also of the Maoist, CPA-Marxist Leninist, and the "Eurocommunist" Communist Party of Australia. Looking toward some possible ultimate merger with a number of these groups, the SWP was putting particularly strong emphasis on any new group being totally independent from and outside of the Australian Labor Party.⁶¹

*The Australian SWP's Move Away
From Trotskyism*

Although unwilling to repudiate its origins as part of the international movement founded by Leon Trotsky, the Australian Socialist Workers Party did move away in the early 1980s from publicly identifying itself as Trotskyist. SWP National Secretary Jim Percy explained this position at a talk at the Educational Conference of the party and its youth group in January 1984.

We haven't been calling ourselves Trotskyists for quite some while. The term itself was invented not by Trotsky but by his opponents, by Stalin. Trotsky himself didn't like it, and today it is too narrow a term to describe us, although it is part of where we have come from. There are many on the left who insist that they are the "real" Trotskyists, and you will find that they are usually the ones who have gone most off the rails, the furthest from Lenin's views. So they can have the "real" Trotsky, if that is what they want. . . .

It's not a useful term in the processes which we want to become involved in, and that we see opening up on the left. It's an obstacle to that process. . . . Now we have largely dropped the term from our own press, but it is going to remain a part of us for one reason that is very important. That is because of Trotsky's contribution to Marxism. We are not going to deny or forget what a great revolutionist he was. . . .

The new generation of revolutionaries

will turn to his writings to seek guidelines on many questions. . . . The new generations of revolutionaries will know how to get rid of the Kremlin's demonology of Trotskyism, as well as getting rid of the cultism of the Trotskyites. What about Trotsky's mistakes—his vacillations before 1917, or the other errors he made afterwards? What of them? We say: So what? If you treat Trotsky as a cult figure, if you consider the Trotsky movement as a cult, then you are going to take Trotsky's mistakes as your own and you are going to hang on to them. So that is a problem for many people who call themselves Trotskyists today. . . .⁶²

Split in Australian SWP Leadership

During the first decade and a half of the evolution of the Socialist Workers Party those who formed the party constituted a relatively compact and united group. But in 1983 there was a serious split in that group, and on November 9, 1983, the National Executive of the party expelled Dave Deutschman, Nita Keig, Kay McVey, Ron Poulsen, and Deb Shookal.⁶³ Deutschman, Shookal, Keig, and Poulsen had all been members of the National Committee of the party until its January 1983 National Conference, and Keig and Poulsen continued to belong to that body for several months.⁶⁴

Although there had developed more or less serious disagreements between those who were expelled and the majority of the party leadership on a number of issues, including the SWP's trade union policy, its relations with the ALP, its association with the Croatian NDP, its electoral activities and other questions, a more serious problem lay behind the expulsion move. It was connected with the growing controversy between the Socialist Workers Party of the United States and the majority of the parties in the United Secretariat.

Traditionally, the SWP's of the United States and Australia had had a particularly

close relationship. To a very considerable degree the U.S. organization had been the model for its Australian counterpart. By 1983, however, the majority of the leaders of the Australian SWP had become convinced, rightly or wrongly, that in pursuance of its general activities within USEC the American organization was trying to split the Australian group. They were further convinced that the five people who were expelled were the nucleus of the leadership for such a split, and were working with the U.S. SWP to bring it about.⁶⁵ The depth of the split between the two SWP's was underscored by the Australian group's publication in 1984 of a pamphlet entitled *The Making of a Sect: The Evolution of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party*.

The bitter relations between the two SWP's was shown at the Australian group's January 1985 convention. Mel Mason, the American SWP's 1984 candidate for president, who was in Australia at the time, was refused permission to present "fraternal" greetings from his organization. At the same time a leading speaker was John Trinkl of the U.S. independent leftist weekly *Guardian*, who explained why "most of the U.S. left had 'urged a vote for Mondale with no illusions.'"⁶⁶

The estrangement between the two SWP's was the stranger, at least for an outside observer, because they both were moving strongly away from traditional Trotskyism. The only major issue on which it would appear that they had strong disagreement was over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which the Australian group supported, and the U.S. SWP criticized.⁶⁷

The movement of the Australian SWP away from Trotskyism resulted in further divisions within the party. Late in 1984 two of the SWP's leaders, Sean Flood and Dave Andrews, warned of a "tendency" within the party and denounced the repudiation by it of the theory of permanent revolution. The majority leadership responded, saying with regard to the Flood-Andrews defense of

permanent revolution that "such an approach, of course, is not a rational one. It stems from an irrational desire to assert, against all the evidence of the living class struggle in the backward countries, the myth that Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution is right. The fact that Comrades Flood and Andrews continue to cling to the dogma of permanent revolution, no matter what the evidence to the contrary is, show they are still trapped in the cult of Trotsky, and have not decisively broken with the sect outlook of Trotskyism."⁶⁸

Ideological Evolution of SWP

In turning away from Trotskyism the SWP looked particularly for inspiration and orientation to Cuba and Vietnam. Thus a draft resolution submitted by the party to the 1985 World Congress of the United Secretariat argued that "the Marxists of the 'Castroist' current have proved in three different countries and are proving today in a fourth and a fifth that they are consciously leading the workers and poor peasants to the creation of socialist states. If it is to remain true to its historic tasks, the Fourth International must seek the closest possible political collaboration with these Marxists in the struggle to build the mass Leninist international and its sections in every country."⁶⁹ Similarly, the SWP National Committee in October 1984 adopted a long resolution explaining why it had been wrong to label the Vietnamese Communist Party "Stalinist."⁷⁰

Another draft resolution submitted by the Australian SWP to the 1985 USEC World Congress clearly indicated the party's new orientation. After an extensive critique of the Fourth International including the allegation that it had "an overestimation of the place, within the tasks confronting the workers states and with the world revolution, occupied by political revolution against the ruling castes in the bureaucratized socialist states,"⁷¹ the resolution set

forth its idea of the nature of the international which should be built.

... the construction of an international revolutionary leadership is an urgent task for the proletariat and its allies. The conditions for building such a leadership are today increasingly favorable. The revolutionary Marxist leaderships in Cuba, Nicaragua and El Salvador, like the Vietnamese Communists, display a profound understanding of the Leninist strategy of revolution. For all of them, the dependence of their own revolutions on their extension internationally is obvious. . . . A pressing task of our movement is therefore to seek active and growing collaboration with these leaderships and to encourage other revolutionary forces to do likewise. By making this task an inseparable part of party-building in each country, we will speed the construction of both national and international revolutionary leaderships.⁷²

The SWP's Final Break With Trotskyism

The Australian swp completed its evolution away from Trotskyism by deciding to withdraw from the international Trotskyist movement. This decision was taken by the swp's National Committee on August 17, 1985. An official statement about this decision noted that "The swp's decision to end its affiliation to the Fourth International culminated a process of rethinking within the swp about many of the ideas it had shared in common with other Trotskyist parties."⁷³

The Australians had participated with a four-person delegation in the 12th World Congress of USEC in January-February 1986. They had presented counterresolutions to both those offered by the majority faction of the USEC leadership and by the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.⁷⁴ Apparently the scant support they received there for the points of

view they presented was the final factor in the Australian swp's decision to quit the ranks of International Trotskyism.

Doug Lorimer, one of the four delegates to the USEC Congress, summed up the reasons for abandoning the Fourth International movement. "The comrades refuse to see that by continuing to keep their sights on building an international organization on a program that is different from those of the people who have made revolutions they are blocking any real possibility of participating fully in the process of building of new parties in Latin America. These parties will not be built through identification with the Fourth International and its program. They will be built only by identifying fully with the mass revolutionary parties in Nicaragua and Cuba, by assimilating the lessons, the policies, the program, that enabled those parties to make revolutions."⁷⁵

Lorimer further developed his argument: "This gets to the heart of the problem with the perspective of building the Fourth International: Its very existence is an *obstacle* to the revolutionaries who are in it participating fully in the process of building a new international revolutionary movement, one with mass influence. This is because it is counter-posed to the mass international revolutionary movement that already does exist and that is extending itself, particularly in Latin America."⁷⁶

From this statement Lorimer posed the logical question and the Australian swp leadership's answer to that question: "Well, if we think that the Fourth International is an obstacle to fully participating in the process of building new revolutionary parties and a new, mass, international revolutionary movement, the question is obviously posed, should our party remain in it? It is the view of the National Executive that we shouldn't."⁷⁷

The International Socialists

In addition to the USEC affiliate several other groups came into existence in Australia in

the 1970s which professed support of one or another of the tendencies within International Trotskyism. One of these was the International Socialists.

The International Socialists of Australia had their origins in Melbourne in what was known as the Tocsin group. Mick Armstrong has observed that the Tocsin group was "in some sense formed in opposition to the SWP (or the SYA as they were then) who were seen as too conservative. . . . A number of people in the Tocsin group were around the Victorian Labor College which was run by an old Trotskyist called Ted Tripp. The Labor College . . . ran courses for shop steward and union activists on Marxist economics, public speaking, etc. It was a center which in the late 60s the small anti-Stalinist left loosely cohered around."

Some of the associates of the Tocsin group subsequently made careers for themselves in the trade union movement and the Australian Labor Party. A few others were among the founders of the Healyite wing of Australian Trotskyism. Those remaining in the left wing of the group reorganized as the Marxist Workers Group (MWC).⁷⁸ Armstrong has described the MWC as "a loose discussion group."⁷⁹

Some of the MWC members evolved in an anarchist direction, but Mick Armstrong has reported that "eventually, under the influence of two comrades from the [U.S. International Socialists] Tom O'Lincoln and Janey Stone (who was an Australian who joined the U.S. IS), who had joined the MWC, a Leninist faction was formed. The group contracted as most of the anarcho types dropped out and the group gradually started to harden up around U.S. IS type politics."⁸⁰

In November 1972 the group, which by then had taken the name Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG), issued what was intended to be the first issue of a regularly appearing newspaper, *The Battler*. It was almost two years later before a second issue came out, however. An explanatory statement in that second number, which carried

the identification "Volume 1, Number 1," said that "we published the *Battler* in the context of the 1972 Federal elections which we saw as a crucial turning point in the fortunes of the working class in the postwar period. We argued that the election was being conducted in a period in which the postwar stability of capitalism was ending. . . . But it soon became obvious that we had neither the theoretical unity or sufficient experience of real struggle to maintain a regular publication. So we began a process of two years discussion, debate and study."⁸¹

In December 1975 as a consequence of the ideological evolution of its members the Socialist Workers Action Group was transformed into International Socialists.⁸² A column run regularly in its newspaper, entitled "What We Stand For," proclaimed that "the International Socialists are a revolutionary socialist organization, open to all who accept our basic principles and are willing to work to achieve them." What the organization stood for was spelled out under seven headings: "Workers' Power," "Revolution, not Reformism," "Smashing the Capitalist State," "Internationalism," "Full Equality and Liberation for Women, blacks, migrants and all oppressed groups," "Revolutionary Party," and "Rank and File Organization."⁸³

The IS did not claim to be a party. A recruiting pamphlet published in 1977, *The Fight for Workers' Power: International Socialists*, explained that "This IS is not a party—just a small group. But it's the best available substitute for a party. It can grow into a party. And joining the IS is certainly the best way to build a party that can lead the working class to power."⁸⁴

That same pamphlet indicated that the organization did not aspire to be a party of "professional revolutionaries." It defined the duties of IS members as including paying dues regularly, selling the group's newspaper, and being active: "We don't have 'paper members.' We encourage reasonable amounts of activity. An active member is an informed member, and that's one way of

ensuring democracy in the is." It added that "many workers have heavy commitments at home, and we're all tired after work. No one is asked to do more than they feel capable of. Here, too, it's basically up to you."⁸⁵

Considerable resources and energy were devoted by is to publishing. They put out *The Battler*, which started as a monthly but by the early 1980s was being published on an alternating bi-weekly, tri-weekly schedule, and they also published a theoretical journal. This was first called *Front Line* and then became in 1980 *International Socialist*. A typical issue of *Front Line* carried more or less extensive articles on "The Postwar Boom, whence it came—where it went," on "Perspectives for Women's Liberation," on "Eurocommunism—Old Garbage in New Pails," on "Consumptive Theory—the theory of underconsumptionists," and a critique of "The Peoples Economic Program" then being pushed by the Stalinist and Eurocommunist parties of Australia.⁸⁶

International Socialist featured a somewhat glossier format than its predecessor but like the earlier periodical it also contained longer and more analytical articles than did the organization's newspaper.⁸⁷

is also published a variety of pamphlets. These tended to reflect the current issues with which the organization was concerned. One of these, *Victory at Philip Morris*, dealt with a strike in which some members of the group had been involved. Others discussed *Perspectives for Women's Liberation: Radical Feminism, Reform or Revolution?*, *Leave It in the Ground: The Fight Against Uranium Mining*, *The Boat People: They're Welcome Here!* (which particularly condemned opposition by other left groups to admitting refugees from Indochina. Another pamphlet, *You Can Say That Again!* consisted of "a collection of popular educational articles which appeared in the pages of *The Battler*."

By the end of 1982 it was reported by Mick Armstrong that is had "roughly 100 members primarily in Melbourne, Sydney, and

Brisbane with smaller branches in Canberra and Adelaide and individual members in Perth and in north Queensland." Armstrong added that "given the massive decline of most of the rest of the left, e.g. the Maoists and the CP, our limited numbers give us more influence than you would otherwise expect."

As to the activities of is, Armstrong wrote that "the areas of work we are involved in tend to vary a bit from branch to branch. At the moment our main area of work tends to be around unemployment. . . . In Melbourne and to a lesser extent Sydney (as the movement is smaller there) we have been heavily involved over the past year in the disarmament movement. We do regular student work, though things on campus are now rather quiet and we do not have all that many student members."

Some is members were active in the labor movement. Armstrong explained that "our main union work has been in the government white collar sector, particularly among Federal government clerks where we have about twenty members. Other than there, and to a much lesser extent among teachers and state government public servants, we have no other concentrations of members in industry. Though we have a number of shop stewards in the post office, the car industry, the metal trades, dockyards, hospitals, etc., they tend to be lone individuals."⁸⁸

Ideological Evolution of the International Socialists

From their inception the International Socialists differed from orthodox Trotskyism in refusing to recognize the Soviet Union and other Communist Party-controlled regimes as "workers' states." However, over the years they modified their analysis.

Mick Armstrong noted that "The MWG/SWAG gradually evolved from orthodox Trotskyism towards a Shachtmanite position (i.e., the politics of the American is),

partly under the influence of two former members of the American IS. However, during 1975–76 the IS moved increasingly toward the general political line of the British IS, i.e., that Russia is state capitalist (not as the American IS considered it: bureaucratic collectivist). . . .”⁸⁹

Armstrong explained the reasons for and nature of this shift. “There are a number of factors: the British IS were much bigger and thus had more prestige, Australians have more contact with Britain than the U.S. and British politics with a Labor Party etc. are more like Australian politics, there was more interchange of membership with the British etc. It was also viewed by the cadres as a more sophisticated analysis. But those are all only minor factors.”

Armstrong explained that from the beginning of the organization there were some of its members who favored the British IS interpretation of the nature of the Soviet Union and similar states. In addition, he noted that “there was a certain worry about what happened to Shachtman, his Stalinophobia etc., also the fact that the U.S. IS did not initially support the NLP” in Vietnam.

At the time SWAG became International Socialists they “adopted a vague position that Russia etc., was a class society and imperialist but did not choose between the two theories. This was a step towards the British position.” Subsequently a Tasmanian group which joined the organization favored the British IS position and, as Mick Armstrong noted, “within a couple of years we formally adopted a state cap position.”

There were two other issues on which the Australians were more closely aligned with the British IS than with its U.S. counterpart. One of those was the problem of the Middle East, where the International Socialists of the United States maintained that the Israeli Jews had a national identity and had the right to national self-determination, whereas “the British IS [like most of the Trot groups] supported the Arab states [unconditionally but critically] in wars with Israel

and did not support national self-determination for Israelis.”

The other issue concerned the “turn toward industry.” Mick Armstrong explained that “The American IS in the early 70s, along with much of the rest of the U.S. far left, adopted a policy of sending their ex-student/middle class/white-collar worker members into heavy industry. This was argued for on the basis of the need to change the social composition of the groups and break into the industrial working class. It was also argued in a perspective of deepening class struggle and economic crisis and a move of a section of the blue-collar working class towards revolutionary ideas.”

But, commented Mick Armstrong, “this idea everywhere has been a failure. . . . The British IS vigorously opposed this strategy from the outset, arguing that it was a totally artificial way to try to transform the class composition of revolutionary organizations. The Australian IS briefly [late ’75–early ’76] adopted this strategy but it quickly was abandoned in the face of the development of internal opposition, some British intervention and our limited ability to carry it out.”⁹⁰

In 1982–83 the International Socialists gave up, at least for the time being, the idea that they were primarily an “activist” group. Adopting the position of being a “propaganda” group, they concentrated on winning converts a few at a time on the basis of their ideas rather than because of their militancy in strikes and other public events.

A report of the National Executive to the 1984 conference of IS described the group’s new line of activities. It said that “The branches have adjusted to the period and have a regular pattern of routine work (most importantly on campus) along with regular talks and more educational activity and attempting to relate these to any struggles that do occur. To this end, the branches have intervened with leaflets, *The Battler* sales, speakers, bookstalls etc. in a wide range of demos and rallies called by broader groupings.”⁹¹

One aspect of this shift in activities was a change in the name of the *is* periodical. In a note explaining this change, the last issue of *The Battler* said that "many of us became dissatisfied with the name of our paper. It related to the Anglo-Australian working class culture of the 1940s. It meant nothing to people from a migrant background and very little to young people. . . ." The name was changed to *International Socialist*.⁹²

Another feature of the change in orientation of *is* was its publication of some pamphlets putting forth its interpretation of various issues. One of these, for instance, was entitled *The Crisis . . . and the Socialist Alternative to Labor*, which in fairly simple English put forth the notion that the world economic crisis after 1974 was the fulfillment of Marx's old prediction of the inevitable collapse of the capitalist system.⁹³

The change in orientation of *is* did not take place without a split. The Adelaide branch withdrew in 1983. However, the membership by early in the following year was still a little more than one-hundred people, in branches in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Canberra.⁹⁴

The Australian Healyites

The Australian organization aligned with the International Committee of the Fourth International emerged in 1971. This was the Socialist Labor League (SLL). It originally developed from groups in Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney. Following the French events of 1968 a group known as the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance (RSA), which contained a heterogeneous mixture of far-left tendencies, formed in Brisbane. In 1970 the RSA split, one faction forming the Revolutionary Socialist Party, which still did not have any very clear orientation. In 1971 the Revolutionary Socialist Party itself divided, one element becoming the Brisbane branch of the Socialist Workers League, the other (minority) element joining with groups in

other cities in December 1971 to establish the Socialist Labor League (SLL).⁹⁵

The Melbourne branch of the SLL emerged from the Tocsin group associated with the Victorian Labor College. When that group broke up, what has been described by an unfriendly source as "a considerable proportion of the left wing" established the Melbourne SLL branch.⁹⁶

In Sydney some members of Resistance broke away late in 1969 to establish a study group known as Workers' Action, which "devoted itself to coming to grips with Marxist theory." When the SLL was formed in late 1971 it became the Sydney branch of the League.⁹⁷

In the beginning the Socialist Labor League had a substantial membership for an Australian Trotskyist organization. One unfriendly observer, Mick Armstrong, has estimated that the SLL may have had as many as 300 members in its early years. Armstrong adds that "they grew quite rapidly initially and had an appeal as (a) they emphasized building the party—the first Trotskyist group here to really do so; (b) they had on the surface a more working class orientation." The principal leaders of the SLL were Jim Mulgrew and Nick Beame.⁹⁸

Ken Marcell has noted concerning the SLL in its early period that "the Socialist Labor League held to three articles of faith: the capitalist crisis, an orientation to the working class, and the need to build a revolutionary party. . . . This marked a step forward for the Australian left, awakening others to those forgotten truths."⁹⁹

However, as time passed, SLL conformed very closely to its British model, the Socialist Labor League (subsequently Workers Revolutionary Party). Thus, it became a strong defender of the Qaddafi regime in Libya.¹⁰⁰ Its opponents accused it of being subsidized by that regime.¹⁰¹

The Australian SLL joined the campaign of Gerry Healy denouncing Joseph Hansen, George Novack, and other leaders of the U.S. SWP for allegedly having been GPU and FBI

agents—thus an issue of the *Asian Marxist Review*, published in Australia by the SLL and its Sri Lanka counterpart, ran a five-page article entitled “How the Investigation Unfolded—Security and the Fourth International,” on this subject.¹⁰²

By the early 1980s the SLL apparently had local groups at least in Sydney, Perth, Newcastle, Melbourne, and Brisbane.¹⁰³ It was publishing a newspaper twice a week, and early in 1982 was conducting a campaign to raise \$200,000 to launch a daily newspaper.¹⁰⁴ Mick Armstrong estimated at that time that the SLL probably had about 150 members.¹⁰⁵

The Australian Spartacists

The Spartacist tendency also developed an Australian group during the 1970s. Early in the decade a New Zealander, Bill Logan, got in touch with the Spartacist League of the United States indicating his agreement with their positions. He built up a small group in New Zealand, then moved to Australia, where he continued to proselytize Spartacist ideas and organized the Spartacist League of Australasia. By the early 1980s the organization existed only in Australia. It reportedly drew its recruits largely from the ranks of the Socialist Workers Party.¹⁰⁶

Subsequently Bill Logan was asked by the international Spartacist tendency to transfer his activities to Great Britain. He was reportedly expelled from the organization while in the United Kingdom.¹⁰⁷ The Spartacist League continued to exist in Australia, however.

The Australian Spartacists expressed the same positions and points of view as the rest of their international tendency. For example, an early 1982 issue of their newspaper, *Australasian Spartacist*, had a front-page article supporting “the Polish government’s preventive coup” against Solidarity. The same issue of the newspaper denounced the Australian Socialist Workers Party’s support of the Polish trade union group.¹⁰⁸ The

newspaper, a monthly, had been appearing since the middle 1970s.

Socialist Fight

One other tendency within Australian Trotskyism has been that of Socialist Fight, which apparently was established in 1980. The May 1981 issue of its periodical of the same name proclaimed: “We want to make *Socialist Fight* a real campaigning paper that can organize the Left. . . . We want to establish Supporters Groups in each capital city, to build a real base for the paper.”¹⁰⁹ The group had its headquarters in Melbourne and was aligned with the Socialist Organizer tendency in Great Britain.¹¹⁰

The evolution of the Socialist Fight group was described by Mick Armstrong: “after getting members as a small group joined (and amazingly enough were permitted to do so) the SWP as a tendency. They left the SWP early this year, having picked up a few people. They appealed to some SWP members who still saw themselves as Trotskyists. They opposed the SWP going into the Nuclear Disarmament Party. Instead, they were for burying themselves in the ALP. Also, they opposed the growth of a large paper membership in the SWP. They are still sympathetic to Socialist Organizer. They have not put out a paper.”¹¹¹

Austrian Trotskyism

Austrian Trotskyism has during most of its history been a very tiny minority within a tiny minority in working-class and left-wing politics. Both in the period between World War I and the triumph of the Dollfuss dictatorship in February 1934, and since World War II, the Social Democrats have been overwhelmingly dominant in the Austrian left. Bolshevism of any kind has never (except immediately after the Social Democrats' defeat in 1934) had the support of more than a relative handful of Austrian workers, and the Trotskyist version of Bolshevism has represented only an infinitesimal fraction of Marxism-Leninism as a whole.

However, the Austrian Left Opposition out of which the Trotskyist movement developed was one of the first such movements to appear in any country. At its inception it was led by two men of considerable significance, Joseph Frey and Kurt Landau, but they were unable to capitalize on their own personal prestige to make the Left Opposition and Trotskyism anything more than a fringe movement.

Early Years of the Left Opposition

Joseph Frey had been one of the founders of the Social Democratic Students Organization and an editor of the party newspaper, *Arbeiter Zeitung*, before World War I. In November 1918, on the fall of the monarchy, he was named head of the Red Guards formed by the Social Democratic revolutionaries and was elected president of the executive committee of the Soldiers Council of Vienna in the following month. He soon fell out with the leaders of the party, particularly Friedrich Adler and Otto Bauer because of his advocacy of the establishment of a government of workers' and soldiers' soviets instead of a par-

liamentary republic. In August 1919 he resigned his official posts and organized a "working group of revolutionary social democrats," and when in the October 1920 legislative elections he urged workers to vote for Communists instead of right-wing Social Democrats Frey was expelled from the Social Democratic Party, joining the Communist Party in January 1921.¹

Fritz Keller notes:

At this period the overwhelming tendency of the Austrian Communist Party was ultraleft (no parliamentary work, no work in the trade unions, a policy of phrases from the soviets connected with adventurous attempts to come to power without support of the majority of the working class). This sort of policy was represented by Bettelheim, who declared himself to be an "emissary" of the Communist International (in reality he was an "emissary" of the Hungarian Communists with the order to establish a Soviet government by whatever methods) and Franz Koritschoner. The leader of the right wing was Joseph Strasser, a follower of the German [Paul] Levi in Austria. Karl Tomann was a "centrist," an oscillating element between the wings. He at first cooperated with Koritschoner against the "newcomer" Frey. . . .²

In the face of still another element headed by Johann Koplenig and supported by the growing Stalinist elements in the Comintern, Frey and Tomann joined forces at the party's Eighth Congress in September 1925.³ By this time Frey was reportedly supporting the international positions expounded by Trotsky.⁴ When Tomann found that he could not win, he returned to the Socialist Party. (The later trajectory of two of the early Austrian Communist leaders is worthy of note. Franz Koritschoner ultimately took refuge in the Soviet Union, where he was arrested by the GPU during the Great Purges, and was handed over to the Nazis as a "German citizen" after the Stalin-Nazi

Pact. Karl Tomann ended up a member of the Nazi Party and was killed by the Red Army in April 1945.⁵

Kurt Landau undertook to weld the existing oppositionist groups into a single bloc within the Communist Party.⁶ Landau, a Viennese Jewish intellectual, had joined the Communist Party in 1921 and soon became head of the Agit-Prop Department and cultural editor of *Rote Fahne*, the party's newspaper. Virtually from the beginning Landau was a spokesman for the left wing, opposing the Comintern Fourth Congress (1922) resolution calling for formation of joint Socialist-Communist governments and supporting Trotsky's positions on cultural issues after the beginning of the struggle within the CPSU.⁷

The Left Opposition leaders were expelled from the Communist Party in late 1926 and early 1927. They then formed the Austrian Communist Party (Opposition) and began to publish a periodical, *Arbeiterstimme* (*Workers Voice*), of which 134 issues were to appear between January 1927 and August 1933.⁸

Factional conflicts soon erupted within the new group. Kurt Landau at first argued in favor of its considering itself a second Communist Party, not just an "opposition" group, but soon gave up this line of argument. In April 1928 Landau and his followers were expelled from the Austrian Communist Party (Opposition) and formed a separate group around a new periodical, *Der neue Mahnruf*. It was particularly centered in Graz, the second largest city of Austria, where it had more members than the Communist Party.⁹

With Trotsky's exile from the Soviet Union the various Austrian opposition groups entered into contact with him. Trotsky invited Kurt Landau to come to Prinkipo to act as one of his secretaries, an invitation Landau rejected. Trotsky then asked Landau to go to Germany to try to bring together the various pro-Trotsky Left Opposition groups in that country. Landau

left for Berlin in September 1929 and with his departure he ended his direct personal involvement in the Austrian Left Opposition ranks.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the Austrian Communist Party (Opposition) under Joseph Frey's leadership had become involved in the general elections of 1927. The year before, the Social Democratic Party had adopted a relatively left-wing platform which called for the seizure of power by force if the bourgeoisie sought to prevent the establishment of a democratically elected Socialist government. This stance won the party broad support in the still militant Austrian working class, and the Social Democrats won the 1927 election as a consequence.

The Communist Party (KPO) had first proposed an electoral alliance with the Social Democrats in the 1927 election, a suggestion rejected by the Social Democrats as a consequence of which the KPO offered its own slate of nominees. Joseph Frey and the Opposition Communists had endorsed the united front in the election, and even after the Communists decided to run their own candidates the Oppositionists campaigned on behalf of the Social Democrats.

This decision of the Oppositionists was perhaps a tactical (and even strategic) mistake. Franz Modlik, then an Opposition member, has said that "that was a grave error and was thus judged subsequently by Trotsky, because we lost through it practically all contact with the working class base of the KPO."¹¹

After his exile from the Soviet Union Leon Trotsky hoped that his followers in Austria might develop into an influential element in the country's politics. In an article which first appeared in the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition* and was subsequently printed in the U.S. *Militant*, Trotsky first strongly denounced what he saw as the concessions of the Social Democrats in the face of growing Fascist pressure and attacks. Although he regarded the Social Democrats and Fascists as both being tools of the Austrian

bourgeoisie he denounced the Comintern's equating the two in accordance with the theory of "social fascism" and called for a change in that policy.

Trotsky wrote that "the first step toward reviving the party should be readmission of the Left Opposition. But in Austria as elsewhere it is clear that a few supplementary lessons of history are needed before communism finds the right road. It is the task of the Opposition to prepare the way for this change. No matter how weak the Left Opposition may be numerically by comparison with the Communist Party, its functions are still the same: to do propaganda work, and to patiently explain. There remains only the hope that the Austrian Communist Opposition will succeed in the coming period in establishing a regular publication—a weekly paper, if possible—that can carry on propaganda work keeping pace with events."¹²

Trotsky and the Austrian Left Opposition

In spite of the optimism he at first expressed about the possibilities of the Austrian Left Opposition, Leon Trotsky was not willing to accept any of the factions which developed in the 1927–29 period as the official Austrian Trotskyist organization. None of them became part of the International Left Opposition (ILO) when it was founded early in 1930.

At that time there were three groups in Austria claiming loyalty to Trotsky's ideas: the Austrian Communist Party (Opposition) of Joseph Frey; the organization established by Kurt Landau and his followers, usually known as the Mahruf Group, from the name of its periodical; and the third, a group headed by Ya. Graef, known as the Internal Group of the Party.¹³

Joseph Frey broke with Trotsky early in 1930. Franz Modlik has noted that "the rupture came . . . on the question of unification with the other opposition Communist groups. Leon Sedov, the other comrades of

the international leadership, as well as Trotsky, were of the opinion that we should seek unification on the basis of parity, as rapidly as possible with the other opposition groups, which Frey rejected categorically. This question brought . . . the rupture of our group with the ILO."¹⁴ Another factor in the Trotsky-Frey break was the Austrian leader's "violent criticisms . . . of the interior regime of the ILO."¹⁵

Subsequently, Trotsky polemicized against Joseph Frey on various occasions. Typical was his comment in a memorandum to the International Communist League dated June 5, 1931: "Take Frey, for example. For several years he carried out his national opposition in a single country, displaying a colossal indifference to everything that went on beyond its borders, including in the USSR. He entered the Left Opposition only in order to have the cover of international 'authority' for his national affairs and his only condition was to be recognized as a leader and then be left in peace. When this condition was not met, he left the ranks of the Left Opposition on the pretext that its organizational methods were bad."¹⁶

But less than a year after those observations Trotsky indicated some possibility of reconciliation with Frey and his group. In a document entitled "Who Should Attend the International Conference," dated May 22, 1932, he wrote "the Austrian Opposition (Frey group) left the ranks of the International Opposition about a year and a half ago under the pretext of the incorrect organizational methods of the International Left. In reality, the Frey group would not tolerate critical attitudes towards its own often erroneous methods. After a rather prolonged existence outside of the International Opposition, the Frey group has applied to the Secretariat for readmission. Does this mean that the Austrian Opposition has renounced its erroneous methods? Let's hope that this is so. In any case, we have no right to refuse the attempt of renewed collaboration with the Austrian Opposition, with the earnest intention of achieving complete unity."¹⁷

Trotsky commented again on the Frey group in a very hostile tone in a memorandum prepared for the International Pre-Conference of February 1933: "The Austrian Frey group first joined our international organization, then left it, again attempted to enter, but refused to supply information about its internal condition, and then took the initiative in breaking off negotiations. Through its actions it has shown that the tasks and aims of the Left Opposition are completely alien to it, and that it needs the international banner of the Bolshevik-Leninists only as a cover for its hopeless stagnation. The pre-conference openly states that the International Left Opposition bears neither direct nor indirect responsibility for the Frey group."¹⁸

Trotsky had no more use for the Mahnruf Group than for Frey and his friends. In an article on "Problems of the German Section," of January 31, 1931, he wrote (referring to Kurt Landau): "Comrade Landau bears a twofold responsibility for the Mahnruf group. He not only ignored all warnings in regard to the group but allowed himself also to make unwarranted attacks on Comrades Mill and Molinier, who had given a fully objective evaluation of the Mahnruf group. The last turn of this group punished Comrade Landau severely, showing that organizational combinations and personal relations do not replace political education on the basis of a definite program." Later in this document, he charged that the Mahnruf group "has undergone all vacillations possible. . . ."¹⁹

Perhaps Trotsky's most biting comments were reserved for the third group, headed by Graef. Graef, he said, "has, in conformity with the customs of Austro-oppositionism, revised his ideological baggage radically within a brief time and elaborated a platform in which everything is comprehensible, except for one thing: why and to what purpose does Graef include himself in the Left Opposition? *Graef's platform is the platform of the camp followers of the Stalinist bureaucracy. . . .*"²⁰ In this indictment Trotsky was

prescient, since Graef did soon return to Stalinist ranks.²¹ Indeed, Pierre Broué has commented that Graef was "undoubtedly working on behalf of the GPU."²²

On January 11, 1931, a "unity conference" of Austrian Trotskyists took place. However, only the Mahnruf group and that of Frank-Graef participated, and the resulting group did not receive official recognition from the international Trotskyist movement.

Then in 1932 the German Trotskyists took the initiative to try to form a viable Austrian group. They sent a former member of one of the Austrian factions, Polzer, to work to this end. On December 19, 1932, a meeting of people who had been expelled from the Frey group (notably Berthold Grad and Franz Modlik) and from the Neue Mahnruf faction (including Karl Mayer and Hans Thoma) was held. It established a new organization which called itself Linke Opposition der KPO (Left Opposition of the CPA). The international Trotskyist "Pre-conference" which met in February 1933 decided on a definitive break with Frey's party and decided to wait six months before accepting affiliation of the new group.²³

By that time there had developed a new left opposition in the Social Democratic Party. Leon Trotsky had some hope to recruit from this group. He wrote a correspondent at the time that "in the present political situation, they are of great significance as symptoms. It is through them that is refracted in an attenuated fashion the anguish of the best Austrian workers." Trotsky added that "serious revolutionaries will attract the young workers and, with them, will found a real proletarian organization which will be capable to use its forces . . . and work in a systematic fashion. There is no other formula."²⁴

The Frey Faction in the 1930s

Joseph Frey and his followers soon changed the name of their group from Austrian Communist Party (Opposition) to Union for

Combat for the Liberation of the Working Class (Kampfbund zur Befreiung der Arbeiterklassen). It published a number of pamphlets and between 1934 and August 1941 put out a periodical *Arbeitermacht* (*Workers Power*).²⁵

The Kampfbund remained the largest of the groups professing more or less loyalty to Trotskyism during the early 1930s. It consisted principally of workers, and at the time Trotsky urged the French Turn, Joseph Frey and his followers opposed this tactic.²⁶

In February 1934 there occurred the short civil war, in which Chancellor Dollfuss crushed the Socialists and established the "Austro-Fascist" regime. The Trotskyists had already been driven underground.²⁷

The Kampfbund remained a propaganda group, dedicated to developing a leadership cadre for the future. Weekly meetings exhaustively studied a series of documents on such issues as dialectical materialism, strategy and tactics, the creation of the party, etc. Also, the Political Bureau issued each week a report on current political developments for discussion by the local groups. It also put out at least two pamphlets, on the issue of war and on the ideas of the Socialist leader Otto Bauer.

The Kampfbund supported efforts of the Social Democrats and Stalinists to work together in the underground. However, Fritz Keller has noted that "all these questions were subordinated to the question of revolutionary conquest of power. Consequently, the Kampfbund linked all support for the Social Democrats and Communists to propaganda, on the one hand for destruction of the bourgeois State, and on the other hand for expropriation without indemnisation of the property of the Church and of the large capitalists, and finally for power of the Soviets on a national and international basis."²⁸

The Kampfbund worked particularly in that period among members of the Schutzbund, the paramilitary organization established in the 1920s by the Social Democrats which had borne the brunt of the fighting in the February 1934 civil war. They won

control of the Schutzbund organization in the Mariahilf section of Vienna. But the Stalinists, who by this time had gotten control of what remained of the central Schutzbund organization, strongly condemned the Trotskyists and called for "purging the labor movement of the poison of Trotskyism." They denounced all references to the Fourth International as attacks on the "independence" of the Schutzbund, although they did not see their own references to the Comintern in that light. Finally, the Mariahilf branch of the Schutzbund disbanded by merging with the Kampfbund.²⁹

In May 1938 a split developed within the Kampfbund over a position on war put forward by Joseph Frey in the December 1937 issue of *Arbeitermacht*. Frey's position was that, in view of the perspective of war of Nazi Germany with the antifascist powers, "the proletariat should in case of war fight at the front against Hitlerite Germany in the bourgeois armies for the annihilation of the principal enemy, fascism, while internally, the struggle against the bourgeoisie must be limited, if that was in the interest of the Soviet Union."³⁰

The split of May 1938 took with it only a minority of the Kampfbund. Fritz Keller has noted that "after the Hitler-Stalin pact nearly the whole leadership left the Kampfbund with a declaration that it was a mistake to have given up the defeatist position in 1937. . . ." He added that "A small group without any activity from this point on held the name 'Kampfbund.'"³¹

The Bolshevick-Leninists

It was 1933 before there was an officially recognized affiliate of International Trotskyism in Austria. This was the Bolshevick-Leninists, a group which had broken away from the Social Democrats.

Apparently, before the establishment of this group, Leon Trotsky had an exchange of correspondence with elements of the Left Opposition of the Social Democratic Party. He urged them to denounce the "betrayal"

of the workers by the official leadership of the party and urged them to openly put forward a program for the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat.³² At least some of the Left Opposition apparently accepted his advice, and formed a Trotskyist organization.

The Bolshevik-Leninists continued to work principally within the Social Democratic ranks, where its criticisms of the apparently passive position of the Social Democratic leaders in the face of the advance of fascism won some support.³³

Driven underground after the February 1934 civil war, the Bolshevik-Leninists continued to publish a periodical, *Der Einzige Weg* (*The Only Way*). Soon after the civil war, the Bolshevik-Leninists had about fifty members, organized in cells. They continued to work within the Social Democrats, who after February 1934 used the name Revolutionary Socialists (RS). The Trotskyists won over the leader of RS in the Josefstadt section of Vienna, Ernst Federn, who began to distribute *Unser Wort*, the periodical of the German Trotskyists, along with the publications issued by the Revolutionary Socialists.³⁴

The Bolshevik-Leninists conducted particularly energetic propaganda around the issue of the Spanish Civil War, which broke out in July 1936. They urged united action by themselves, the Socialists and the Communists to recruit volunteers to fight in the Loyalist army, raising the slogan, "All qualified comrades to the front!"³⁵

With considerable help from the Stalinists, who publicized the real names of the Trotskyist militants and leaders, the police conducted two roundups of members of the Bolshevik-Leninists in March and July 1936. They were tried and given prison terms ranging from a few months to five years for "high treason."³⁶

The Revolutionare Kommunisten

Still another Trotskyist group appeared in Austria in this period. It was a split-off from

the Communist Party Youth, provoked by the Comintern (and Austrian CP) adoption of the popular front policy. Via exile groups in Paris this element, the Revolutionare Kommunisten (RK), established contacts with the Bolshevik-Leninists. They originally proposed that the RK become the youth organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists, but negotiations to this end were unsuccessful. In 1937 and 1938 there was edited in Prague a new *Der Einzige Weg* as a joint organ of the Austrian RK, the Swiss Trotskyist group Action Marxiste, and the Communist Internationalists of Czechoslovakia.³⁷

Fritz Keller has written about the Revolutionare Kommunisten that they "had an ultraleft tradition—the central point of conflicts with other groups was the tactic in the coming world war, where the Revolutionare Kommunisten held a very strong defeatist position [the enemy is always in one's own country, you have to fight for the defeat of your own country, there's no tactical difference to be made between countries which are allied with the Soviet Union and those countries which are not]."³⁸

The RK made substantial gains, principally at the expense of the Communist Youth. The Young Communist organizations in the Margarethen and Leopoldstade districts of Vienna went over entirely to the Revolutionare Kommunisten. Various other Communist Youth groups invited representatives of the RK to address them. All of this, of course, provoked violent denunciations from the leaders of the Communist Party and its youth group. During this period, the RK published a periodical, *Bolshevik*, with the slogan at its masthead "The enemy is in our own country!"³⁹

However the RK, like the other two Trotskyist groups, remained a relatively tiny organization. Fritz Keller has noted that "the three Trotskyist organizations were able until the Nazi invasion to make small inroads into the camp of the traditional workers parties, but they were not able to break their domination. As throughout Western Europe, Social Democracy and Stalinism did

not have the power to win, but their specific gravity was sufficient to tie to their organizations the great mass of the working class."⁴⁰

Austrian Trotskyism Under the Nazis

During the period of "Austro-Fascism" (February 1934–March 1938) not only the left-wing parties but also the Nazis were underground. During this period the Nazis adopted a very "social" line of propaganda, and there were frequent contacts between them and members of the various left-wing groups. This fact greatly facilitated the work of the Gestapo once the Nazi armies moved into Austria in March 1938.

A special situation existed during the month before the Nazi invasion. The government of Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg, in an effort to rally all Austrians behind resistance to the Germans, released the left-wing political prisoners and entered into contact with the left-wing parties. The Trotskyists benefitted from these moves along with the Socialists and Communists. They carried on active and more or less open propaganda not only for a full amnesty but also for reestablishment of the right to strike and full freedom of political activity. In addition, "the immediate armament of the workers was the central issue in our agitation and our propaganda. There was then great combativity among the workers and this line was generally viewed very positively."⁴¹

But as the Trotskyists profited from the month's "reprieve" in February 1938, so they suffered from the Nazi invasion. Fritz Keller has written that "after the entry of Hitler in Austria (March 1938), the Bolshevik-Leninists and Revolutionare Kommunisten were dissolved by emigration, deportation into the concentration camps."⁴²

The Bolshevik-Leninists' organization was completely destroyed by the Nazis. The Revolutionare Kommunisten were able to maintain some degree of organization until the outbreak of the war. The Kampfbund was the Trotskyist group best able to main-

tain its organization. Joseph Frey fled to Switzerland, but from there he was able to write and have smuggled into his comrades in Austria several publications. These included a critique of a book by Otto Bauer and a résumé (in May 1940) of the struggle within the Kampfbund over his position in favor of supporting those powers allied to the USSR and fighting against the Nazi regime.

It was this struggle within the organization, rather than Nazi persecution, which finally destroyed the Kampfbund. By 1940 virtually all of its important figures had left the organization. Many of them did not cease political activity but transferred their attention to new Trotskyist organizations which began to appear in 1939–40.⁴³

The first new Trotskyist group to appear in the Austrian underground was the Proletarische Revolutionäre. It was established in 1939 by former members of the Bolshevik-Leninists and the Revolutionäre Kommunisten, as well as elements who had split from the Kampfbund in disagreement with Joseph Frey on the war issue. It began to publish a newspaper, *Iskra*, named after the periodical which Lenin had edited early in the century.⁴⁴

Soon afterward a second group appeared, the *Gegen den Strom* (Against the Current), which issued a periodical of the same name. It took a "neutral" position on the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939–40, and rejected the orthodox Trotskyist definition of the Soviet Union as a "degenerated workers state," claiming that it was, rather, a "petty bourgeois state."

In April 1943 the major leader of the *Gegen den Strom* group, Joseph Jakobovits, was arrested by the Gestapo and soon afterward a number of other leaders of the group were also picked up. In a subsequent trial Jakobovits, as well as two other leaders of the group, Franz and Leopold Kascha, were sentenced to death and were killed soon afterward. Four other members of the group received long jail sentences.⁴⁵

The third underground Trotskyist faction

to appear was the Proletarische Internationalisten. In March 1939 they began to publish a review, *Der Vorkote* (*The Precursor*). In May 1940 the periodical's name was changed to *Dex Vorposten* (*Vanguard Post*). Apparently it was made up principally of former members of Joseph Frey's group.⁴⁶ Fritz Keller has noted that "the Proletarische Internationalisten made concessions on the national question, declaring that the Austrians are no longer a part of the German nation."⁴⁷

After the Gestapo raids of 1943, the Trotskyists went deeper underground, virtually cutting off all efforts to maintain contacts outside of the country. Fritz Keller has noted that "this isolation was both a protection and an obstacle: a protection, because it reduced to a strict minimum the possibilities of the Gestapo tracing and infiltrating the groups (the Nazi police ceased trying in fact after several vain efforts); . . . an obstacle, for the existence as a circle engendered a spirit of narrow sufficiency among some members which lasted for years."⁴⁸

Some Austrian Trotskyists spent long periods in Nazi concentration camps. There some of them were as much victims of the Stalinists as of the Nazis. Two, Karl Fischer and Ernst Federn, were signers of the Declaration of Buchenwald, the statement of Trotskyist concentration camp prisoners which got wide publicity.

Ernst Federn, who was not only a Trotskyist but also a Jew, spent the period from 1938 to 1945 in Nazi concentration camps. In unpublished memoirs he wrote concerning his Stalinist fellow prisoners that "the professional labor leaders and Communists in Buchenwald were not necessarily erudite but they were skilled organizers and accustomed to power and the use of politics. Political infighting came to them as easily as breathing. Step by step: first with small intrigues and then with sweeping strokes, they eliminated their political enemies. Sometimes they used ss, who were pawns in their game."⁴⁹

The Proletarisch Internationalisten group

(PI) served as the rallying point for the unification of most of the Austrian Trotskyists. As early as 1940 one schismatic faction of the Kampfbund joined the PI, and at the beginning of 1942 another group which had broken from the Frey organization did likewise. After long discussions the PI fused with the remains of the Proletarische Revolutionare, and the name of the united group was changed to Karl-Liebnecht-Bund (Internationale Kommunisten). They began in January 1945 to publish *Der Spartakist* as the central organ of the united Trotskyist group.

Fritz Keller has maintained that "one must consider the Trotskyists after the process of unification as the *only* organization of the illegal workers movement of the period having a coherent and firm political structure. . . . In 1944, even the CPA, in spite of its incomparably greater financial resources and techniques, no longer had a functioning central organization in the interior—its members worked individually in the non-partisan resistance circles."⁵⁰

The Austrian Trotskyists in Exile

Various of the Austrian Trotskyists who had left the country after the Nazi invasion continued their political activities in exile. Keller has written that "the emigrated members of the Osterreichische Bolschewiki Leninisten formed in exile a separate sector of the Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands, which existed until 1939 or 1940—until the end of the IKD; after that year no activity of this group as *Austrian* Trotskyists is known to me."⁵¹

The Revolutionare Kommunisten exiles continued their activity until the end of the war. Two of them, George Scheuer and Karl Fischer, participated in the founding congress of the Fourth International in September 1938, where they voted against the motion to establish the International.⁵²

Fritz Keller has said of the IK exiles that "the Revolutionare Kommunisten Osterreichs at first changed their name in exile to

Revolutionäre Kommunisten Deutschlands and then to Revolutionäre Kommunisten. They worked in the French underground all the time until the liberation in 1945. Their political positions were strongly in opposition to all Trotskyist groups, they came under the influence of 'ultraleftism,' some of them became Bordiguists. . . .⁵³

The RK exiles became part of an international tendency also having Belgian, German, and French members, which in 1939 published a periodical *Bulletin Oppositionnel*. During the war the tendency issued various other periodicals, including *Der Marxist*, *Vierte Internationale*, *Spartakur*, and *Fraternization Proletarienne*. Most of the Austrian group were, until July 1941, located in Montauban in unoccupied France, operating more or less openly. At that time they went underground.

In November 1940 and December 1943 the RK exiles organized clandestine conferences in southern France. However, the Gestapo and Vichy police "made horrible ravages among their Militants," according to Fritz Keller. He added that "the divergence with Trotskyism became more profound in the resistance, the Revolutionary Communists defending more and more ultraleft positions; they thus violently criticized, retrospectively, the Left Opposition position until 1933 of reforming the CI, entrism, the proclamation of the Fourth International in 1938, and the revolutionary defeatism of the Trotskyist groups. . . . They considered the USSR as a capitalist state which should no longer be defended by the workers. . . ."⁵⁴

Austrian Trotskyism After World War II

After the capture of Vienna by the Russian troops in April 1945, the Karl-Liebknecht-Bund published a document entitled "Thesis of April 10, 1945." This laid down the line of policy to be followed by the organization. It called for the Bund as such to remain underground but to work within both the revived Socialist and Communist parties to

form left wings which could be the core of a new revolutionary party which would be the Austrian section of the Fourth International. It promised support for any measures of the Socialists and Communists "truly in the interests of the workers."

Fritz Keller has noted that "it is striking that these theses are programmatically in accord with the declarations of the European Conference of the Fourth International, in spite of the fact that the Austrian Trotskyists had not at that moment established any foreign contacts."⁵⁵

Relations with the Fourth International were soon reestablished through the good offices of a United States war correspondent in Vienna who belonged to the Socialist Workers Party. The International Secretariat brought pressure to bear for the unification of all the existing groups in Austria claiming loyalty to Trotskyism. This was soon achieved, when the surviving elements of the Kampfbund and Gegen den Strom factions joined the Karl-Liebknecht-Bund, which thereupon took the name Internationale Kommunisten Osterreichs (IKO). It continued to publish *Der Spartakist*, until then the organ of the Bund.⁵⁶ Keller has noted that "the work of unification of the section in 1945 was done without any ideological agreement on central positions; the unification was the product of the pressure of the International, and of the hope for a revolutionary wave, which would make the Internationale Kommunisten Osterreichs the vanguard of the Austrian proletariat."⁵⁷

Fritz Keller has also noted that "at this moment, 1945, the organization counted with 194 militants (73 members, 54 candidates, 25 sympathizing persons), 14 members of the organization were shop stewards, most of the members were workers or former workers."⁵⁸

The Soviet occupation authorities were quite hostile to the reemergence of a Trotskyist movement in Austria. Raimund Loew has observed that "in spite of the reestablishment of the democratic rights of the workers, the organization did not dare for

reasons of security (the GPU in the territories under Soviet occupation) appear in the light of day and carry on mass work."⁵⁹

Fritz Keller has given a notorious example of the degree of hostility of the Soviet authorities. "They caught (1947) Comrade Karl Fischer coming from the concentration camp Buchenwald . . . at the check point between the Russian and American sector in Linz (there was a bridge over the Danube), accused him of being an agent of the French, American . . . secret service and deported him to Siberia. He came back after the state contract between Austria and Russia in 1955." He added that "that means: the work in Austria under Russian control was strictly illegal."⁶⁰

During the late 1940s the Trotskyists were able to acquire a modicum of influence in a few union organizations and within the left wing of the Socialist Party, led by Erwin Scharf. They were active in a number of strikes which took place in these years in Vienna and other Austrian cities. There were Trotskyists among the delegates to a Conference of Enterprise Councils held during a strike wave in 1950. However, the Trotskyists were unable to get the Socialist dissidents under Scharf to form a new revolutionary party. Instead, the left-wing Social Democrats joined the Communist Party.⁶¹

Further Splits in Austrian Trotskyism

Unity in the Austrian Trotskyist ranks, established in 1945, did not last for long. It was achieved without any discussion of the causes of past differences, and these soon began to appear once again. Fritz Keller has noted that the first controversy was about the character of the postwar East European countries under Communist control. He added, "Frey in Switzerland supported his followers in Austria in putting forward positions characterizing these states as 'degenerated capitalist states.' This discussion was followed by another: the old question of war tactics and Frey's position on these was brought up to date. . . ."⁶²

As a consequence, Joseph Frey's followers soon broke away once again. They launched their own newspaper, *Arbeitermacht*, which continued to be published into the 1950s. As an effective political organization, that faction of Austrian Trotskyism ceased to exist with the disappearance of its newspaper.⁶³ As late as the 1970s, however, there were still a few followers of Frey who maintained a small organization.

There was further dissidence in the IKO after the departure of Frey's followers. Some people who had been associated with the Gegen den Strom group attacked the Soviet Union as being "capitalistic" and soon left the IKO. They withdrew in 1948, to found a new group which they called the Proletarische Vereinigung Osterreichs, and began to publish a newspaper, *Arbeiterblatt*. That group endorsed the statement of Natalia Trotsky breaking off all relations with the Fourth International.

In 1949 a new controversy broke out over the issue of entrism. Although the majority of the IKO favored maintaining an independent organization, a minority supported entry into the Social Democratic Party (SPO) and apparently broke away to do so after publishing for a time an internal bulletin, *Mitteilungsblatt der Opposition in der IKO*. In 1954 unity was restored among the Trotskyists when the majority group of the IKO also went into the SPO.

During all of the period after the war the Internationale Kommunisten Osterreichs published an illegal periodical, *Der Spartakist*. However, after the signature of the State Treaty and the withdrawal of Soviet (and Western) troops from Austria in 1955 they began to put out a legal paper, *Die Internationale*, which declared itself on its masthead to be the organ of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International.

After a few years of relative internal tranquility, the Austrian Trotskyists again split during the early 1960s. This time the schism involved their international relationships. At the time of the division of the Fourth International in 1953, the Austrian Trotsky-

ists had sided overwhelmingly with Michel Pablo and the International Secretariat. Even after Pablo began to have differences, first with the International Secretariat and subsequently with the United Secretariat, the IKO majority remained loyal to him.

Since the group's periodical, *Die Internationale*, was controlled by people who were anti-Pablo the IKO withdrew its support from that newspaper in 1962. In the following year they launched another newspaper, *Arbeiterkampf*.

After the 1965 World Congress of the United Secretariat the groups in the IKO broke into rival organizations. The Pabloite tendency continued to put out *Arbeiterkampf*, while the supporters of the Mandel-Frank-Maitan faction began issuing, together with their German counterparts, *Internationale Perspektiven*, the predecessor of *Inprekorr*.

The Pabloite group sought to gain influence within the Union of Socialist Highschoolers, one of the principal centers of the Austrian New Left in the 1960s. They had little success in this regard and by the 1980s the group had reportedly been reduced to a small core of "superannuated veterans."⁶⁴

Those Austrian Trotskyists loyal to the United Secretariat also sought to gain support among elements of the New Left. They succeeded as a result in establishing in May 1968 a new Austrian section, the Trotskyistische Organisation Osterreichs, which put out a publication called *Revolts*. This group lasted only a few months and thereafter for several years the principal activity of those still loyal to the United Secretariat was in the maintenance of discussion groups to talk about articles published in the West German Trotskyist periodical *Inprekorr*.

Austrian Trotskyism in the 1970s and 1980s

At the beginning of the 1970s the United Secretariat sent a Swiss Trotskyist to Aus-

tria to try to reorganize the activities of its followers there. As a consequence the Gruppe Revolutionare Marxisten was established in August 1972, following a split in a Marxist group, the Marxistisch-Leninistische Studenten, and it became the Austrian Section of the United Secretariat. It published a newspaper, *Rotfront*, which in 1980 changed its name to *Linke*.⁶⁵

The factional struggle in the United Secretariat during the 1970s between the "Europeans" headed by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank and Livio Maitan on the one hand, and the Socialist Workers Party of the U.S. and its allies on the other, had its impact in Austria. In 1974-75 a group broke away from the Gruppe Revolutionare Marxisten declaring its opposition to the decisions of the Ninth and Tenth World congresses of USEC. According to Fritz Keller, "they were excluded and unified with comrades coming from the Frey group of the fifties in the Internationale Kommunistische Liga (IKL)." The IKL began publication of a periodical, *Permanent Revolution*.

However, the IKL suffered another schism in 1978, with a group breaking away to form Commune, named after the periodical it began to publish. The Commune people declared themselves a part of the United Secretariat even if they had been excluded from it, and sought "to build up an international faction together with the German Spartacus group and a group split from the Italian section of the USEC." After trying several times to get readmitted to the Gruppe Revolutionare Marxisten, the Commune tendency dissolved in 1982.

The IKL suffered still further division in 1980, with a dissident faction putting out a theoretical newspaper, *Der Marxist*. Fritz Keller has noted that "the group around *Der Marxist* said that it was necessary to start a process of open discussion to rethink all problems of the history of the workingclass, particularly in the last ten years." In 1982 they applied for readmission to the USEC affiliate, the GRM. The IKL, in the meantime,

had stopped putting out *Permanente Revolution*.

Conflicts within the United Secretariat had in the meantime provoked the formation of still another small group, at the time of the 1979 split of the "Morenoists" from USEC. It began publication of a newspaper, *Manifest*. Although they participated in the Parity Commission organized by the Morenoists and the Lambertists in 1980-81, they did not join with either of those elements when the Parity Commission broke up. Rather, they joined with a German group around the newspaper *Internationales Sozialistisches Forum* to form a Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency of the Fourth International, declaring that they "wanted a process of discussion and practical work together with the internationalists of all countries, to support unification of the Trotskyists on the basis of principled agreement."⁶⁶

One other international faction of Trotskyism also had an affiliate in Austria for a time. This was the international Spartacist tendency, to which was affiliated the Bolscheveiken-Leninisten Osterreichs, which had originated from a split in the Trotskistische Organisation Osterreichs. When the Spartacists decided to concentrate their German-speaking militants in West Germany and Berlin, the Austrian group [concentrated largely in Vienna until then] was dissolved.

Finally, there existed in 1982 a group which Fritz Keller has categorized as advocating "national Trotskyism," called Internationale Kommunisten Osterreichs. Keller added that there are also "two Bordiguists. That's all."⁶⁷

Belgian Trotskyism Before World War II

Belgian Trotskyism is of consequence in the history of the world movement for a number of reasons. These include the importance of the Left Opposition within the Communist Party before their break with the Comintern; the original high regard and continuing interest of Leon Trotsky himself in the group; the working class base of Belgian Trotskyism before World War II; and the renown of its best known figure after the Second World War, Ernest Mandel, who has been widely regarded as one of the world's leading Marxist economists and theoreticians as well as being one of the half-dozen principal figures in the leadership of the largest faction of International Trotskyism.

The Opposition Fight Within the Belgian Communist Party

Nadya De Beule, the historian of prewar Belgian Trotskyism, has noted that "No other [Communist] Party was so involved in what they called the Russian question as the Belgian one. It was the only party in Western Europe where the Russian question was daily discussed in the Communist press."

The strength of the Left Opposition within Communist Party ranks in the 1920s has its origin in the way in which the Belgian Communist Party was established. It emerged from two groups, one led by War Van Overstraeten and "composed of antimilitarists, Luxembourgests, anarchists, revolutionary syndicalists."¹ Van Overstraeten had joined the Socialist Young Guards (Jeunes Gardes Socialist—JCS) before World War I. He led the JCS of Brussels out of the Belgian Labor Party—POB (Bel-

gium's Second International affiliate)—and after merging with several groups in Wallonia (French-speaking Belgium) he formed the Belgian Communist Party (PCB) in November 1920. It was recognized by the Comintern a month later in spite of its rather heterogeneous and extreme leftist adherents.

The second element in the early Belgian Communist Party was headed by Joseph Jacquemotte. Called Les Amis de L'Exploité, it was made up of left-wing elements who had left the Belgian Labor Party. Under pressure from the Communist International, the PCB and the Jacquemotte group merged in September 1921. Although the Les Amis de l'Exploité group were more numerous than the original PCB, War Van Overstraeten became secretary general of the new Belgian Communist Party resulting from the merger.² But as Miss De Beule has commented, "the fusion became rather an intellectual marriage than a marriage of love."³

The two elements which had joined to form the PCB continued to be antagonistic. Nadya De Beule has noted that "the confrontation between these two tendencies appeared after 1925 and consisted of three points: the internal organization, the position toward the trade-unions and the Russian question." She added that "Jacquemotte swallowed all the directives of the CI. W. Van Overstraeten, on the other hand, dared to criticize them, but always in a very careful way. For example, the question of . . . Bolshevization: Van Overstraeten and his followers didn't react against it, but didn't execute the order either. . . ."

As the struggle within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union developed, the leadership of the Belgian party took a stand on the issue. In March 1925 the Central Committee voted for a motion introduced by Van Overstraeten protesting the Soviet party leadership's denunciation of Trotsky as "anti-Leninist, deviationist, etc." The vote was fifteen to three, Jacquemotte and two friends being the only opponents.

Although the Belgian Central Committee asked the Soviet party for documentation on the issue of Trotsky they received no response. Only in November 1927 after Trotsky had been expelled from the Soviet party, did the Belgian Central Committee move again. It once more passed a motion—again fifteen to three—asking the Soviet party to reverse its decision, and asked for a Comintern conference to deal with the issue and repeated its request for documentation on the question. As before, Jacquemotte and two others voted against this motion.⁴

There followed a period of internal party discussion of the "Russian question." Stalin and other Soviet party leaders used their influence to obtain a decision in their favor. They began a strong attack on Van Overstraeten as a "sectarian, a counter-revolutionary, of being ambitious, etc." They also invited a number of Belgian Communist leaders to the USSR, and two of these, P. Coenen and H. De Boeck, the leader of the Communist Youth, became strongly anti-Trotsky.

In January 1928 two reports on the Russian question—one sympathetic to the Soviet Left Opposition submitted by Van Overstraeten, the other supporting the Stalinists introduced by Coenen—were discussed by the Central Committee. The vote on them was a tie thirteen-to-thirteen as a result of the fact that the Youth and representatives of immigrant Communists residing in Belgium were given the right to vote, on Comintern insistence, and they supported the pro-Stalinist position.⁵

A representative (unidentified) of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) attended this Belgian CP Central Committee meeting. In a speech after the vote on the resolutions on the Russian question he accused the Van Overstraeten leadership of the Belgian party of leading the Belgian CP into "stagnation," and quoted a resolution of the ECCI to the effect that the ECCI "feels that the shock to its morale which the discussion of the

Russian question has brought to the ranks of the Belgian Communist Party must serve to force an examination by all members of the party of the vital problems of their own activity in order to find, together with and with the aid of the CI, a way out of the impasse in which it has been for too long a time. . . ."

The ECCI representative then made it very clear that he held the fault to be with the Belgian party leadership, particularly Van Overstraeten. He accused the leadership of "sectarianism allied with opportunism," and with having been wrong in its trade union work, its handling of the question of Flemish nationalism, and in its antimilitarist campaign—the principal activities of the party in recent years. He also attacked its "organization, methods of work" apparently alluding to the resistance of the Van Overstraeten leadership to "bolshevization" of the PCB.⁶

On February 8, 1928 the controversy continued at a meeting of the Executive Bureau of the PCB. Van Overstraeten, A. Hennaut, M. Lootens and L. Lesoil presented a proposed "response" to a letter dated January 18, which the ECCI representative had presented to the January 29 meeting. Jacquemotte introduced, with the endorsement of F. Coenen, H. De Boeck and F. Morriens, a proposed resolution responding to the same ECCI letter.

The document of Van Overstraeten and his supporters put much if not most of the blame for the alleged failures of the PCB leadership on the Jacquemotte faction, and particularly on Jacquemotte himself. It objected to the ECCI's attacks on an alleged "sectarian nucleus" in the PCB leadership, saying that "it is certain that the present invention of the so-called sectarian nucleus has as its only cause the position which we have taken on the question of the opposition. Our comrades reject this foolishness and this deceit. . . ."

The proposed resolution of Jacquemotte and his friends largely repeated the arguments which had been made by the ECCI

representative. However, the document at the beginning stated that "the PCB recognizes in particular that ECCI was right in seeking the causes which have created in the PCB a relatively fertile field for work of the Trotskyist opposition. . . ." In its penultimate paragraph the proposed resolution said that "leftist sectarianism allied with social democratic practice are the characteristics of International Trotskyism. The same characteristics of each of our leaders aligns them exactly with International Trotskyism."⁷

In March 1928 all party members were called upon to vote on the two motions which the Central Committee had debated two months earlier. In the interim the party membership grew from 700 to 1,000 as the result of intense recruiting by pro-Stalinist elements. The final vote was in favor of the Stalinists by about two to one.⁸

The final decision about the fate of the Left Opposition within the Belgian Communist Party was taken at a national conference of the party on March 11–12, 1928, in which the pro-Stalinist elements had a substantial majority. A Manifesto of the Opposition of the PCB, issued after the conference, noted that "the Opposition struggled to have an armistice accepted until the VI Congress of the CI, maintained its demand for the reintegration of the Russian opposition and its representation at this congress." However, "the majority wanted right there the expulsion from the Party" of the opposition.

On the first day of the conference the majority sought to pass a motion suspending from all leadership positions for six months Van Overstraeten, Hennaut, Lesoil, Lootens, Cloosterman, Dewaet and Polk, and the cancellation of Van Overstraeten's membership in the Chamber of Deputies. It also appointed a commission to present a series of questions to all the members of the opposition present at the conference. Those members refused to appear before the commission. As a consequence, "the majority of this conference virtually declared the expul-

sion of the opposition from the PCB." The opposition thereupon established a "provisional committee," composed of Bourgeois, Hennaut, Lootens, Mathieu, Plisnier, van den Heuvel and Van Overstraeten.⁹

Establishment of the Left Opposition

After this conference all further discussion of "the Russian question" was forbidden within the Belgian Communist Party. As a consequence the principal leaders of the Left Opposition and many of their followers were expelled from or left the Communist Party. Miss De Beule has noted that "the group was composed of the founders of the Communist Party and the majority of the leaders of the federations. . . . Only the paid leaders such as De Boeck and Coenen remained in the CP. Only with the daily help of the C.I., the party could continue its activities. It was only during the parliamentary elections and the big mine strike in 1932 that members were regained."¹⁰

Upon leaving the Communist Party ranks the Left Oppositionists had very few contacts outside of the Communist International. There had existed a small group of left-wing syndicalists, *Unité*, with which the Left Oppositionists had had contact, and it had close association with the French periodical *Révolution Proletarienne*, with which Alfred Rosmer, Trotsky's first major French supporter, was associated.¹¹ *Unité* no longer existed in 1928, however.¹²

At the time of the split in the Communist Party the party claimed 1,000 members. Of these, 350 voted for the minority.¹³ Once outside the PCB, the Left Opposition first formed the PCB: Opposition, and War Van Overstraeten was its secretary general.¹⁴ It soon became the *Groupe d'Opposition du Parti Communiste*, and ultimately changed its name once again to *Opposition Communiste*. The group soon began to publish two periodicals, *Le Communiste* in French and *De Kommunist* in Flemish. For a few months the Opposition held many success-

ful meetings in various parts of the country.¹⁵

There were Opposition centers of strength in both the Walloon (French) and Flemish parts of the country. Nadya De Beule has noted that "between 1928 and 1940 there were always two places where Trotskyism had a fairly great influence: Antwerp for the Flemish-speaking part, and Charleroi for the French-speaking part of Belgium. The Antwerp group, under the leadership of Louis Polk, was active in the port. Polk himself always had close contact with Henk Sneevliet from the Netherlands." Polk dropped out of the leadership of the Antwerp group before the beginning of World War II.¹⁶

De Beule has noted that "the group of Charleroi, led by Leon Lesoil, had some influence among the miners. They always chose the side of Trotsky, whatever happened. They did not even hesitate to change their point of view with different interpretations of Trotsky's ideas. In this way, they always remained in contact with the group in France that Trotsky supported."¹⁷ Ernest Mandel has noted that "Both Polk and Lesoil had been members of the C.P.'s Central Committee since its foundation. Polk died in a German concentration camp during World War II."¹⁸

Early Activities of Belgian Trotskyists

The Belgian Oppositionists engaged in a variety of activities once they were outside the Communist Party. For one thing they issued a number of throwaways and pamphlets, addressed to various elements of the working class. One of these, for the unemployed, explained the Marxist concept that the "standing army of the unemployed" was an integral part of the capitalist system. It argued the community of interest of those workers who were unemployed and those who still kept their jobs and urged a series of demands, including a 35-franc per day payment to the unemployed and a seven-hour day for those still employed.¹⁹

Another publication of the Opposition

Group of the PCB was a denunciation of a meeting of the Socialist International held in Brussels. It accused the Socialist leaders of Belgium and elsewhere of being "social patriots" and ended with a series of exhortations to the workers, including "Against the military projects of the bourgeoisie!" "For the unity of all workers!" and "Support the left wing of the Communist movement!"²⁰

The Belgian Trotskyists, because of their working-class base and the influence which they had in the trade union movement—particularly in the independent Knights of Labor (Chevaliers du Travail) among the miners of the Charleroi area—were presented more quickly than most national Trotskyist groups with the question of whether they were a "faction" of the Belgian Communist Party or an entirely separate party. Leon Trotsky, in spite of his general attitude at the time that the International Left Opposition was a "faction" of the Comintern, made an exception in the Belgian case.

Writing his Belgian followers in September 1929 Trotsky said that "at a time when in Germany as in France or in Czechoslovakia the Left Opposition can and must be only a faction, the Belgian Opposition can become an independent party in direct opposition to the Belgian social democracy. It is the direct duty of the international Opposition to help the Belgian Opposition occupy the place which rightly belongs to it, and, above all, to help it publish its weekly paper."²¹

As a consequence of this position the Belgian Oppositionists participated on their own in the May 1929 parliamentary elections. For this purpose they issued an election manifesto addressed "to the Workers of the Country." This explained why all of the other parties did not reflect or represent the interests of the workers. A relatively long passage dealing with "the so-called Communist Party" concentrated mainly on the struggle of the Opposition in the USSR, but ended: "In Belgium, as elsewhere, the so-called Communist Party lies about the situ-

ation in Russia, lies about the acts of revolutionary Communists who combat the traitorous leaders of the Russian Revolution. It lies about the opinions and acts of revolutionaries whom it has excluded from its own ranks. It wears constantly before the workers a mask of deceit and lying."

The peroration of this proclamation declared that "a revolutionary party impregnated with the faith of the proletariat in its own victory is necessary. . . . Prepare with us the future of this party. Come to the Opposition Communists to work against the bourgeoisie, social-democratic corruption, against false Communism."²²

The results of participating in the 1929 elections were disappointing for the Communist Opposition. Even in Charleroi where the Communists didn't even have members and the Left Opposition had a strong group, the Stalinists received more votes than the Trotskyists and the local Trotskyist leader, Leon Lesoil, concluded that this was "because the workers hadn't understood what the split had been about, and because the c.p. had more money at its disposal to make more propaganda. Last but not least, the workers didn't like to waste their vote on a divided group."²³

Trotsky soon came to the conclusion that he had made a mistake in authorizing his Belgian supporters to function as a separate party. On June 21, 1930, he wrote that "I made a wrong prognosis because of insufficient information."²⁴

The Belgian Opposition Communists were also active in the affairs of the international Trotskyist movement in those early years. Thus, Leon Lesoil and Adhémar Hennaut represented the Belgian Trotskyists at the first international meeting of the Left Opposition in Paris in April 1930.²⁵

Split of Van Overstraeten and Hennaut

Within a year and a half of the establishment of the Opposition Communists it became sharply divided, and shortly afterward Bel-

gian Trotskyism suffered its first important split. The issue which began this internal controversy was that of the Chinese Eastern Railway.

The Chinese Eastern had been built by the Czarist government as the consequence of one of the "unequal treaties" imposed by it on the Chinese Empire during the nineteenth century. The Bolshevik regime had in due time inherited the Russian government's interest in the railway and in 1925 a joint commission, presided over by Trotsky himself, had modified the relations between the Soviet and Chinese governments insofar as the Chinese Eastern Railway was concerned.²⁶

In late 1929 the Chiang Kai-shek government, having more or less consolidated its hold on China proper and having worked out a modus vivendi with the warlord of Manchuria, Chang Tso-lin, demanded that the Soviet government give up control of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Leon Trotsky, perhaps understandably—both in view of his general position of unequivocal defense of the Soviet regime against all others and of his previous personal involvement in the issue—strongly supported the Stalin regime's refusal to cede to the Chiang Kai-shek government its interest in the railroad.

However, War Van Overstraeten and a majority of the Central Committee of the Belgian Opposition Communists disagreed with Trotsky's position and urged that the Soviet regime give up control over the railroad so as to avoid the appearance of being "imperialist." According to Nadya De Beule only the three members of the Committee from Charleroi supported Trotsky's position. They launched an extensive criticism of Van Overstraeten's leadership of the group, and on October 6, 1930, the Charleroi federation of the Opposition Communists withdrew from the national organization. They soon began to publish a periodical of their own, *La Voix Communiste*. They had thirty-five members by that time.²⁷

Leon Trotsky at first sought to reason

with Van Overstraeten, to try to get him to change his mind. In an article which was first published in the Russian language *Bulletin of the Opposition* but which certainly must have gotten to Van Overstraeten himself, Trotsky started out by indicating why he thought it necessary to present a "special answer" to the position Van Overstraeten had taken: "a. the question itself is of decisive importance for defining the Opposition's road; b. the Belgian Opposition occupies a high place in our international ranks; c. Comrade Van Overstraeten rightly occupies a leading place in the Belgian Opposition."²⁸

Trotsky sought to prove to Van Overstraeten that the USSR could not be "imperialist" in this situation, since "imperialism" was a function of capitalism and the capitalist regime had disappeared in the Soviet Union. He also argued that the presence of Soviet control over the Chinese Eastern Railway was an aid to the future recovery of the revolutionary movement in China, which had been so badly defeated in 1926–27 by Stalin's mistaken policies.²⁹

Van Overstraeten and his supporters remained unconvinced. The split with the international Trotskyist movement became final. They changed their name to Ligue des Communistes Internationalistes (LCI) and began to publish their own *Bulletin de la Ligue des Communistes Internationalistes* in Brussels.

Van Overstraeten soon abandoned politics altogether, and the leadership of the Ligue was assumed by Adhémar Hennaut. It seems to have reverted to the more or less "ultra left" position which many of its members held before the founding of the Communist Party in 1920. This is reflected in a document published in the *Bulletin* early in 1934 which argues, "That struggle and its lessons demonstrate how outmoded and even dangerous are the tendencies toward parliamentary political actions, as well as the old bureaucratic structure of the unions. . . . The function of the old union

cannot be identified with the organ of the Workers Council any more than the reformist parliamentary parties can be confused with organizations of struggle for the social revolution."³⁰

The Ligue did not break all relationships with the more "orthodox" Trotskyists. For a short while it worked with them in trying to form a united "trade union opposition," but these efforts proved fruitless. In July 1932 the two groups had a joint public debate to delineate their different points of view. Nor did the LCI abandon interest in the Left Opposition outside of Belgium. It maintained contacts at least as late as 1932 with the group around Alfred Rosmer in France, and exchanged publications with them.³¹

Nadya De Beule has described the evolution of the Van Overstraeten-Hennaut group. She has said that after Hennaut took over the leadership "he established contacts with the Bordiguists and anarchists. There hardly were contacts with the Flemish group. In 1934 the federation of Antwerp left the LCI to join the federation of Charleroi. . . . In 1938 the LCI split again with a group influenced by the Bordiguists leaving. In 1950 there were only three members left: Hennaut, Leon Smots, and Michel Lootens (all three founders of the CI.)"³²

The Opposition Communiste de Gauche

By the end of 1930 the only Belgian group still associated with the Paris center of the International Left Opposition was the Oppositionist Communist Federation of Charleroi. It soon undertook the task of reorganizing the Trotskyist movement on a national basis.

On January 11, 1931, the Charleroi group began to publish a new periodical, *La Voix Communiste*, which carried on its masthead the designation "Organ of the Belgian Group of the Left Communist Opposition, affiliated with the International Left Com-

munist Opposition." The front-page editorial introducing the new newspaper began: "In publishing this journal, the Oppositionist Communist Federation of Charleroi and some comrades of other regions of the country who are in accord with it, and with the International Left Communist Opposition directed by Comrade Trotsky, perseveres in the work of preparation of the Workers for the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie."

The same editorial proclaimed:

Against the former leadership [Van Overstraeten-Hennaut] of the Belgian opposition group, which claims that it is necessary to create a new Communist Party, against that leadership which has disorganized the forces of the Belgian opposition, thus favoring the unhealthy work of the Stalinist appointees, falsifiers of Communism, *La Voix Communiste* must struggle. For the good combat, against the bourgeoisie and its social democratic and Christian supporters, to stop the Stalinist falsifiers of the leadership of the Communist Party from discrediting it and Communism before the masses. To develop true Communist action among the masses of the Belgian workers, politically undefended and without revolutionary guidance. . . .³³

In Brussels a significant group under the leadership of Georges Vereeken broke away from the old leadership in 1931 and joined forces with the Charleroi federation. Vereeken brought with him a group of young people, mainly unemployed, and control of a local taxi drivers' union.³⁴

In November 1932 the Opposition Communiste de Gauche had a national conference. According to *La Voix Communiste* it was attended by more than sixty delegates from several parts of the country. Among other things the conference dealt with the Trotskyists' electoral position and their activities in the trade union movement.³⁵

By 1934 the new Opposition Communiste

de Gauche (OCG) had local groups in many parts of the country.³⁶ The base of the strength of the Charleroi group was its influence in the independent Knights of Labor among the miners of the district. It played an important role in a spontaneous strike of the miners in July–August 1932. As a consequence of this walkout the membership of the Charleroi Trotskyist group rose from thirty-five to about one hundred.

In Brussels a group of Trotskyist youth with some twenty-four members established a separate youth organization in 1933. In the following year they took the lead in forming the Commission Centrale Internationale de la Jeunesse with German and French young Trotskyists.

In August 1934 this Trotskyist youth group in Brussels signed an "action pact" with the Socialist and Communist youth. Its purpose was "the realization of unity of the workers," and "revolutionary action." This marked the first common agreement between the Belgian Trotskyists and Stalinists since the 1928 split. It even included a demand for asylum for Leon Trotsky.³⁷ Nadya De Beule has pointed out the uniqueness of this agreement. She has noted that "Belgium was the only place in Europe where Trotskyists, Communists, and Socialists signed a pact."³⁸

The Comintern "punished" the Belgian Stalinist youth for signing this agreement.³⁹ As a consequence the agreement had few practical results beyond the holding of a few joint meetings in various parts of the country.⁴⁰

Contacts With Trotsky and the International

Leon Trotsky continued to take an active interest in the fate of his Belgian followers. After trying unsuccessfully to win over Van Overstraeten to his point of view on the Chinese Eastern Railway question he encouraged those in the Belgian Left Opposition who agreed with him on the issue to

break away from Van Overstraeten and Hennaut. He sent word (through M. Mill, then associated with the International Secretariat) to Georges Vereeken, calling upon him to break with Van Overstraeten and align himself with the Charleroi group. He was reported to have commented at the time that "the comrade chauffeur . . . is preferable to all the Van Overstraetens."⁴¹

At the end of December 1932 when *La Voix Communiste* was converted into a weekly, Trotsky wrote his followers a letter of encouragement which they published:

Recently you have transformed your publication into a weekly. Now, you increase its format. Excellent successes. It must even more be a cause for our rejoicing that your periodical is not supported by occasional contributions but exclusively by a proletarian organization. On that matter, the Belgian section can and must become an example for many others.

Your organization is closely tied to the working masses. . . . You verify the ideas and methods of the Opposition by the experience of the class struggle so that they penetrate deeply into the consciousness of the workers. This is in general a necessary condition for the vitality of a revolutionary tendency and for its systematic growth.⁴²

The official Belgian Trotskyists remained loyal to Trotsky's strategic and tactical positions. So long as he maintained that his followers were an "opposition" of the Communist Party and International they adhered to that position. For instance, an article in *La Voix Communiste* celebrating the second anniversary of the newspaper proclaimed that "undoubtedly world events confirm the correctness of the point of view of the International Left Communist Opposition. All our efforts must be directed towards: the reintegration within the CP; for internal democracy in the party, for unification of Communist forces; for defense of the Russian Revolution by reentry en bloc of all the

best excluded revolutionaries. That is the heavy task that *La Voix Communiste* promises to defend."⁴³

When Trotsky abandoned the "opponentist" position, his Belgian supporters followed this change of strategy. This was reflected in their changing their name Opposition Communiste de Gauche to Ligue Communiste Internationaliste [Bolshevik-Leniniste].⁴⁴

The French Turn in Belgium

Although the majority of the Belgian Trotskyists also followed Trotsky's advocacy of "entrism" or the "French turn," they did not do so without provoking a significant split within their ranks. At the time of the adoption of entrism in France there existed an active Left within the Belgian Labor Party (POB). It was headed by Paul Henri Spaak. He had visited Trotsky and conversed extensively with him soon after Trotsky arrived in France in 1933.⁴⁵ He clearly never ceased being a Social Democrat, and certainly was never a Trotskyist. However, at that moment it served Spaak's purposes to have the Trotskyists join the ranks of the POB to strengthen the POB Left.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the virtually unanimous first reaction of the Belgian Trotskyists, hearing of the decision of the majority of their French colleagues to enter the Socialist Party there, was negative. The leadership of the group decided to send Georges Vereeken to Paris to confer with the International Secretariat on the subject. There, Leon Sedov urged that Vereeken talk with his father, Leon Trotsky, and arranged an appointment. Vereeken thought that he and Trotsky had reached an agreement that the Belgian Trotskyists would do nothing to hamper the entrism tactic in France but that that tactic would not become a general policy for the movement, and would not be extended to Belgium. However, when he later returned to Paris and talked with the people of the International Secretariat again he found that

they did not accept that interpretation of his conversation with Trotsky.⁴⁷

The first move toward entrism in Belgium was the suggestion in the summer of 1934 that the Trotskyist Youth join the Jeunes Gardes Socialistes, the youth movement of the POB. There followed a discussion of that and the general entrism issue in *La Voix Communiste*. This discussion included the statement of the French Trotskyists on entering the French Socialist Party; a statement of Georges Vereeken opposing entrism on principle; an article by Davister and De Waet, principal lieutenants of Leon Lesoil in Charleroi, opposing Vereeken's argument; and an article of the Liège group against entrism.

A referendum on the entrism issue in the Charleroi group in November went against the idea by a vote of 55-44, with five abstentions. Trotsky's strong support finally turned the tide in favor of entrism, however, and adoption of a resolution at an assembly of the group early in December supporting the entry of the Trotskyists into the POB even without their receiving (as their French counterparts had) the right to organize within the Labor Party as a faction of their own.⁴⁸

A formal announcement of the entry of the Trotskyites into the POB was finally made in *La Voix Communiste* on April 28, 1935. It published a "Political Declaration of the Ligue Communiste (Trotskyiste)," which started out by arguing in favor, in general, of the united front. It then stated that "in Belgium, where the POB and the Commission Syndicale have the preponderant influence in the working class, the best way of realizing practically the united front is to enter the large central union and the POB, to defend there an active policy of struggle for the immediate and general interests of the working class and a policy of effective defense against reaction."

The declaration added that "entry into the POB implies the disappearance of *La Voix Communiste*, but it does not imply any abdication of our principles, any renunciation

of our ideas. It is determined only by the gravity of the circumstances which create a duty for every conscious element of the labor movement—if it wishes to carry out an active and revolutionary role in the development of events—to take immediately and without hesitation a place of combat in the ranks of the organized working class." This declaration was signed by La Ligue Communiste (Bolchevik-Leniniste).⁴⁹

The group led by Georges Vereeken which opposed the French turn published its own version of *La Voix Communiste* when the entrism element suspended that publication. Vereeken soon changed the name of the periodical to *Spartacus* and subtitled it "Organe de la Ligue Communiste Internationale (Trotskiste) en Belgique."⁵⁰ Although the Vereeken group was clearly a minority element it continued its independent activities in Brussels and elsewhere in the country for more than a year. Its principal centers were in Brussels and Liège, where its major leader was Lucien Renery.⁵¹

The Vereeken group clearly continued to regard itself as Trotskyist. Thus, when the International Communist League issued an "open letter" calling for the establishment of a Fourth International on the basis of the "Declaration of the Four," *Spartacus* published an open letter in reply from the Ligue Communiste Internationaliste (Trotskyiste). This document contained objections to the entrism tactic but proclaimed that "our adhesion to your struggle for the creation of the IV International is a Communist adhesion. We will struggle alongside you to elaborate the indispensable arm for the overthrow of the domination of the bourgeois class in the entire world and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the means historically necessary to safeguard humanity from barbarism. . . ."⁵²

Trotsky strongly criticized Georges Vereeken and his group. In commenting on the Vereeken group's announcement of support for forming the Fourth International Trotsky wrote: "Vereeken's August article

is not only wrong but criminal in its total lack of balance and sense of proportion. Not one worker who really believes Vereeken's article will join the Fourth International, and since Vereeken's group is condemned to vegetate ineffectually outside the Fourth International, his article can only sap its own foundations. That is the fate of sectarianism in general."⁵³

Those who entered the Belgian Labor Party encountered a situation of some confusion. At almost the same time, in March 1935, Paul-Henri Spaak, leader of the POB left wing, accepted a ministry in a "national unity" government headed by Prime Minister Paul Van Zeeland of the Christian Social Party. This sudden shift by Spaak led to a split within the ranks of the POB Left, Action Socialiste. Some followed Spaak. The rest were divided between pro-Stalinist elements, and those who aligned themselves with the entrism Trotskyists and rechristened their group Action Socialiste Révolutionnaire (ASR).⁵⁴

The Vereeken group followed this struggle within the ASR with great interest. When the Trotskyists within the ASR succeeded in ousting the pro-Stalinist Albert Marteaux from the editorship of *Action Socialiste*, the organ of the ASR, the Vereeken periodical *Spartacus* published an article on that move, commenting that "every proletarian will rejoice that the healthy tendency was able to remove Marteaux and his closest associates from the editorship."⁵⁵

The Trotskyist element within the ASR was particularly successful in winning support from the Socialists in the areas of Charleroi and the Borinage. In the latter region they recruited the principal ASR leader, Walter Dauge, who for a few years became a major figure in the Belgian Trotskyist movement.⁵⁶

Establishment of the Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire

The ASR operated principally in the French-speaking parts of Belgium. Its principal

counterpart in the Flemish area was the Antiwar League, and the Flemish entrust Trotskyists became part of it. However, Louis Polk, the major Trotskyist figure in Antwerp, was expelled from the League before the end of 1935.⁵⁷ The League ultimately patched up its differences with the POB leadership at least to the extent of not getting expelled from the party.

The relationship of the ASR Trotskyist-oriented leadership with the POB grew increasingly strained, however. In December 1935 the ASR officially came out in favor of formation of a new revolutionary party and a new international. This provoked the leaders of the POB to threaten to expell the ASR from the Labor Party. The final showdown between the ASR and the POB leadership came in March–April 1936 over issues raised by the May general election. As a candidate for deputy on the POB ticket Walter Dauge refused publicly to endorse the party's campaign program. When in addition he wrote an article denouncing the way in which the POB Congress on March 29 was organized and conducted, the POB leadership took action against Dauge and the ASR.⁵⁸

The local federation of the POB removed Walter Dauge from its list of candidates for deputy. It followed this up by expelling him and all those who expressed opposition to this treatment of Dauge. As a consequence the ASR named its own list of candidates in the Borinage and Charleroi areas.⁵⁹ These candidates, which included Walter Dauge at the head of List 7 in the Borinage and Leon Lesoil at the head of List 8 in Charleroi, were endorsed by Vereeken's Ligue Communiste Internationaliste (Trotskyiste). In areas where there were no ASR nominees the Ligue announced that "it is necessary to vote for those of the POB."⁶⁰

The ASR lists did not do as well as the Trotskyites hoped they would. They received a total of slightly more than 7,000 votes in the Borinage region, equivalent to 8.45 percent of the total votes cast in the area.⁶¹ Dauge was not elected, although

Georges Vereeken maintained later that Dauge had expected to win.⁶²

Virtually as soon as the ASR was expelled from the Belgian Labor Party the Ligue Communiste Internationaliste (Trotskyiste) made overtures looking toward reunification of the two Trotskyist groups. The immediate reaction of the ASR was to say that any negotiations were premature until after the May 24 elections.⁶³ However, by the end of May the first preliminary discussions had begun. Leaders of the two groups signed a joint statement, beginning: "The cause of the debacle of the labor movement, and of the defeats of the world proletariat has been and remains the total incapacity of the present working class leaderships—in our country Parti Ouvrier Belge and Communist Party—to direct the proletariat." Further on, the statement said, "In the face of this situation, it is the duty of every conscious worker to do all that is humanly possible to create a new revolutionary leadership of the proletariat." To that end, the statement said, the ASR and League were undertaking discussions.⁶⁴

On July 11–12, 1936, a further planning conference was held by representatives of the ASR and Vereeken groups. Among other things this meeting called for efforts to bring together in a new party all of the far-Left groups in Belgium, including the Hennaut faction and the Anti-War League, and defined a policy for dealing with the situation in the trade unions. After the expulsion of the ASR from the Labor Party a number of unions controlled by the ASR were thrown out of the Socialist-controlled trade union central. The July meeting decided on a policy of trying to bring together the expelled unions in a single group, for an effort to obtain readmission to the Socialist central labor group (in the name of trade union unity), and opposition to trying to get any other unions to withdraw from the Socialist federation to join the group established by the expelled unions.⁶⁵

Subsequently the Flemish affiliates of

both groups were united and at a conference on September 25–27 the youth groups of the two were merged.⁶⁶ Finally, on October 11, 1936, the Action Socialiste Révolutionnaire and Ligue Communiste Internationaliste (Trotskyiste) were joined to form the new Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire (PSR).

The founding conference of the PSR issued a "Manifesto of the Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire to the Proletariat, to All of the Working Classes." It announced that "The two of the vanguard, the Groupes d'Action Socialiste Révolutionnaire and Ligue Communiste Internationaliste (Trotskyiste), each excluded respectively from the ranks of the 'socialist' and 'communist' parties because of their loyalty to the revolutionary cause, have fused to create the army which the proletariat of the country lacks. From the constitution of the party, it adheres to the Center for the Fourth International."

The manifesto ended with a short statement of the program of the new party. This included "direct action through strikes" for defending the workers' living standards, "preparation for armed struggles against fascism," preparation to convert international war into civil war, and "preparation for the proletarian revolution, struggle for destruction of the capitalist state, expropriation of the possessing classes, installation of a workers and peasants government and dictatorship of the proletariat."

The PSR launched a new periodical *La Lutte Ouvrière*. In its first issue it announced that *L'Action Socialiste Révolutionnaire* and *Spartacus* had been merged into the new newspaper. *La Lutte Ouvrière* carried a subheading "Organ of the Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire adhering to the Center for the IV International."⁶⁷

The formation of the new party represented a considerable numerical increase in Belgian Trotskyism. In the Borinage region alone, the PSR had some 770 members at its inception.⁶⁸ The PSR's second largest group was in Charleroi, and there were other party units of some importance in Ghent (led by

Lievie de Pauw), Louvain, Verviers, Luik, and Antwerp (where Leon de Lee and a German known only as Max were the principal figures). There was also a group in Moeskroen led by Maria Van Cauwenburghe.

Walter Dauge became the first "political secretary" of the organization and was succeeded in 1937 by Georges Vereeken, who had at first been "administrative secretary." The political secretary post was apparently equivalent to that of a secretary general. Other members of the party executive included Camille Loots, Lucien Renery, Leon Lesoil, Jules Vos, and Georges Fux.⁶⁹

The new party also had a youth counterpart, the Jeunesse Socialistes Révolutionnaires. It held its second national congress in November 1937, at which fifty delegates from federations in Charleroi, Brussels, Liège, and the Borinage area were present. It was reported that delegates from the Flanders region were unable to attend because of financial reasons. The organization claimed to be in the lead in carrying out antimilitarist propaganda among the nation's youth. The convention, although expressing sympathy with the Spanish POUM then being persecuted by Stalinist secret police, branded the POUM "a centrist party" and called on the true Spanish Trotskyists to establish "the real revolutionary Party, the vanguard conscious of its tasks. . . ."⁷⁰

As did their confrères in other countries, the Belgian Trotskyists spent much time and energy on the question of the Moscow Trials. On March 24, 1938, they organized an open air meeting in Antwerp on the issue, at which Georges Vereeken spoke in Flemish and Walter Dauge in French.⁷¹

Controversies Within the PSR

During the less than four years in which the Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire existed, it was marked by almost continuous controversy and it experienced one significant split. The Paris headquarters of the Center

for the Fourth International was very much involved in most of these disputes.

One of the earliest conflicts to break out within the party concerned a special parliamentary election in Brussels on April 11, 1937. There were two candidates, Leon Degrelle, head of the country's fascist party, the Rexists, and the prime minister, Paul Van Zeeland, supported by the Christian Social Party (to which he belonged) as well as by the Liberals, the POB, and the Communists.

For the Trotskyites the question was whether or not the Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire should offer its own candidate against both Degrelle and Van Zeeland. After bitter controversy at various levels within the party, a national conference of the PSR on March 21 decided that the party did not have enough strength in the Brussels area to launch its own nominee, and so urged its followers to vote for Prime Minister Van Zeeland. However, the statement of that conference stressed that although Degrelle was the workers' number one enemy and had to be defeated, Van Zeeland was their number two enemy and should not be regarded as a defender of democracy.⁷²

This action of the PSR provoked a strong letter of condemnation from the Bureau for the Fourth International in Paris. Its open letter to the Belgian Trotskyists commented that "against the Rexists, the PSR proposed organization of workers militias and an offensive for the socialist program. How is it possible to pass from this position to the one of support for Van Zeeland?" It accused the PSR of leaning toward a Popular Front policy, unanimously condemned by the Trotskyist movement. It also professed to see a relation between the position on the Brussels election and the PSR positions on trade union policy and relations with the Spanish POUM.⁷³

The party's trade union policy was another subject of bitter controversy within the Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire. Until early 1937 the Trotskyists had worked prin-

cipally within the Socialist-controlled labor movement. But Socialist trade union leaders, particularly in the Borinage area, began to expell leading Trotskyists from their unions. As a consequence, the PSR was faced with a quandary. On the one hand, the Trotskyites believed, at least in theory, in the unity of the trade union movement. On the other hand, it was increasingly difficult, especially in the Borinage area, for the Trotskyists to continue to work within the Socialist unions—which belonged to the Parti Ouvrier Belge, an organization like the British Labor party in which unions were directly affiliated with the party. One suspects that the conflict was particularly bitter in the Borinage area because the Trotskyists there were predominantly people who had recently left the Socialist ranks.

At the March 21, 1937, national conference of the PSR two trade union resolutions were presented. One, submitted by the Borinage federation of the party, called for formation of a new central labor organization there, and for it to recruit disillusioned members of the Socialist and other union movements (the Christian Socials, Liberals and even Rexists each had their own trade union groups). The other motion, supported by delegates from all of the other party federations, called for the regrouping in an organization of those expelled from the Socialist union ranks, but for the purpose of regaining admittance to the POB unions, not for establishing a new federation of unions. The former resolution was carried by ninety-four votes (all those of the Borinage delegates except one), against sixty-nine, with the delegates from Mouscron abstaining. Clearly, the Borinage delegates constituted a majority at that PSR national conference.⁷⁴

That vote did not end the issue. Walter Dauge, the principal figure among the Borinage Trotskyists, was finally won over to the point of view that the establishment of a separate Trotskyist-dominated trade union federation was a mistake. As a consequence, there was a further extensive discussion of

the issue in a plenary session of the Borinage federation of the PSR.⁷⁵ Finally the issue was debated once again at the Second National Congress of the party. There the position originally advocated by the Borinage federation was narrowly reaffirmed by a vote of 15-13 with one abstention.⁷⁶

Another domestic matter which was much debated within the PSR was whether or not to participate in the local as well as the parliamentary elections of 1938. The Second Congress decided in favor of doing so, but with the proviso that where the party could not offer candidates it would urge its supporters to vote for those of the POB.⁷⁷ The party actually won a majority in the municipal elections in Walter Dauge's home town, a small miners' village.⁷⁸

The party did not split over any of these domestic issues. Although Georges Vereeken, the PSR secretary general and head of its organization in Brussels, strongly supported the idea of the party's having its own candidate in the Degrelle-Van Zeeland contest and opposed supporting Van Zeeland,⁷⁹ he and Leon Lesoil, principal figure in the Charleroi area, joined forces in opposing the establishment of a separate Trotskyist-controlled trade union federation, and the party did not split over either issue.⁸⁰

The question which finally brought about a new division in the ranks of the PSR was that of its relations with the International, and the International's attitude toward Opposition groups in at least two other countries. On these questions Georges Vereeken and the majority of the PSR leadership were opposed.

One question at issue was the attitude to be assumed toward the Spanish Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM). Most Spanish Trotskyists, having broken with Trotsky under the leadership of Andrés Nin, had joined with another group to form the POUM late in 1935. The POUM had for a short while joined the Spanish Popular Front but had withdrawn from it, and in September 1936, two months after the outbreak of

the Civil War, had joined the regional government of Catalonia, with Nin as minister of justice. Later, they had been persecuted by the Stalinists, who brought about their expulsion from the Catalan government in December, and after the spontaneous uprising in Barcelona early in May 1937 in which the POUM-ists and anarchists participated had brought about the outlawing of the party.⁸¹

The debate in the Belgian PSR and in the Center for the Fourth International concerned whether or not the Spanish Trotskyists should work within the POUM or try to form a "real" revolutionary party outside its ranks. The PSR, after some hesitation, followed Trotsky and the Paris Center in condemning the POUM and advocating the establishment of a new Trotskyist party in Spain. Georges Vereeken strongly opposed that stand; many years later, in retrospect, he felt that the new Spanish Trotskyist group organized during the Civil War had in all likelihood been heavily infiltrated by the GPU, and that Trotsky himself had been greatly influenced in his attitude toward the POUM and toward Andrés Nin by Mark Zborowski, who was unmasked twenty years later as having been a GPU agent while working as Leon Sedov's closest associate in the Center for the Fourth International.⁸² There seems little basis for Vereeken's suspicions concerning the Spanish Trotskyists.

The second international question which determined Vereeken's ultimate break with the PSR centered on relations with the Netherlands' Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (RSAP), headed by Hendrick Sneevliet. That party had been one of the four signers of the original call for the establishment of a Fourth International. Sneevliet had since had various disagreements with Trotsky, and his party finally withdrew from the Center for the Fourth International. In spite of this, Vereeken as secretary general of the PSR continued to maintain relations with Sneevliet, and the Central Committee of the PSR at first opposed attempts by German

Trotskyites living in Antwerp (and belonging to the PSR) to establish an anti-Sneevliet faction within the ASAP. Nevertheless, the majority of the PSR leadership finally conformed (over Vereeken's protests) to the demand of the Center for the Fourth International and of Trotsky himself that they break off all relationship with Sneevliet and his party.⁸³

The final issue which brought about the split in the PSR was Georges Vereeken's opposition to the immediate formal establishment of the Fourth International, planned for September 1938. Vereeken thought that it was premature, since the Trotskyists did not have sufficient strength to justify such a dramatic gesture. The majority of the leadership of the Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire supported the move, and in the light of suggestions by some of the Belgian Trotskyist leaders and most particularly by Leon Trotsky himself that anyone who did not support the proclamation of the International had no place in the movement, Vereeken decided to resign.⁸⁴

Leon Trotsky had intervened personally and directly in the controversy within the PSR. On June 12, 1938, he wrote a letter to Leon Lesoil: "I consider the situation of the Belgian section as very delicate. I find that the policy of Comrade Vereeken develops more and more in an anti-Marxist direction. There is no important question since 1933 in which we have not seen Vereeken supporting a false position, sometimes sectarian, sometimes opportunist. . . . It is necessary to take him energetically by the arm, help him *amicably* to understand that one does not conduct politics with caprice, improvisation and small personal combinations."⁸⁵

Vereeken resigned three weeks before the July 1938 Second National Congress of the PSR. He quit both as secretary general and as a member. At that meeting he was permitted to present his point of view, but he was unable to influence the delegates. As *La Lutte Ouvrière* reported afterward, "the

sum total is that our Congress affirmed, in opposition to the sterile attempts of Vereeken, its firm decision to continue in the vanguard, with and under the banner of the IV International."⁸⁶

Once outside the Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire Vereeken began to publish his own periodical, *Contre le Courant*. The group he gathered around him amounted to about thirty people.

Belgian Trotskyism During and After World War II

The split in Belgian Trotskyist ranks which had begun in 1938 persisted throughout World War II. With the outbreak of war both groups began to suffer very considerable persecution at the hands of the authorities. Once the Nazis conquered Belgium all Trotskyists there had to work very much in the underground.

The Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire largely disintegrated. Walter Dauge was arrested soon after the war began, and Georges Vereeken believed that he talked too extensively to the police. In any case, Dauge dropped out of political activity in 1940, and with his retirement, the Borinage federation of the PSR largely disappeared.¹

In the winter of 1940-41 the PSR was revived under the name Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire (Trotskyists). The principal figure in reviving the party was Abraham Wajnsztoek, known more widely as Abraham Leon. At the time in his early twenties, Leon became the Secretary of the PCR and subsequently a member of the European Secretariat of the Fourth International.²

The PCR published *La Voie de Lenine*, an underground periodical, throughout most of the war. Soon after the liberation of Brussels from the Germans a front-page editorial in the first open issue of the periodical said that "during almost four years, *La Voie de Lenine* has appeared clandestinely. Whether printed, mimeographed, through a thousand difficulties, in spite of all the dangers, it did not cease, alone of all the labor press, to make understood the voice of revolutionary internationalism, the voice of Leninism."³

The Vereeken faction also continued

what activity it could. It called itself Groupe Communiste Trotskiste pour la IVème Internationale. Immediately after the outbreak of the war Georges Vereeken, along with Rodolphe Prager (of the Molinier group in France) and a representative of a dissident British Trotskyist group, signed a proclamation "in the name of the Fourth International" denouncing the conflict. Of course, none of the signatories in fact were at that point members in good standing of the Fourth International.⁴

Vereeken believed that it was necessary to be as cautious as possible in conducting underground activity, particularly after the Nazi conquest of the country. As a consequence, he rejected an invitation of the PCR early in 1941 to try to organize public protests against the Communist party's anti-British (and by implication pro-German) propaganda. Vereeken wrote later that "we refused, because we had come to the conclusion that the very relative freedom permitted by the Nazis had for its objective to make it possible to arrest as many Communists and others as possible the moment Hitler . . . launched the German armies against the USSR."⁵

The Vereeken group also had an underground paper, *Le Pouvoir aux Travailleurs*, which carried at its banner, "They will not triumph: Neither Hitler, nor Churchill, nor Stalin. Under the Marxist flag of Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht, the victory of the world proletariat is assured."⁶

From time to time the Groupe Communiste Trotskiste pour la IVème Internationale published "Ideas and Documents" in addition to their paper. Number six in that series was one of the last documents of Trotsky, "Again and Once More on the Nature of the USSR," defending the thesis of the Soviet Union still being a workers' state. This mimeographed publication carried the same slogan as the newspaper.⁷

The two groups maintained what international contact they could. The PCR joined with the French Parti Ouvrier Internationa-

liste in establishing the European Secretariat of the Fourth International, which was ultimately reorganized by the FI. For its part the Vereeken group entered into contact late in 1941 with the Sneevliet party in the Netherlands, and even before the outbreak of the war had established contacts with the Molinier group in France.

Like their French colleagues, the Belgian Trotskyists did not play very much of a role in the more or less official Resistance. They tended to regard it as "bourgeois," or "petty bourgeois," an analysis which some of them recognized in retrospect to have been faulty.⁸

The Belgian Trotskyists lost many leaders to the Nazi terror. A particularly large roundup of Trotskyists took place on June 22, 1941, the day after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union. Subsequently, many more were arrested and killed. Among the victims during the war were Leon Lesoil, Abraham Leon, Leon De Lee (a leading Antwerp Trotskyist), and Lucien Renery of Liège, the right-hand man of Georges Vereeken. Others were jailed and sent to concentration camps but survived. These included Georges Vereeken, who was finally caught in February 1944, Camille Loots, sent to Mauthausen concentration camp, and Ernest Mandel, then a very young leader of the movement.⁹

The Belgian Trotskyist movement was very sadly depleted by World War II. Its more or less mass organizations in the Borinage and Charleroi areas were largely destroyed and its leadership was decimated by the Nazi repression. The movement was never to recover the strength which it had between 1928 and 1938.

Entrism Once Again

The postwar situation did not prove favorable for the Belgian Trotskyists. Not having participated to any great extent in the wartime Resistance, they emerged from the war much weaker than they had been in 1939.

Furthermore, the psycho-political cir-

cumstances right after the war did not favor the Trotskyists. Georges Vereeken has noted that "The 'liberation,' the departure of the Gestapo and the return of white bread, coffee and chocolate provoked a wave of chauvinist enthusiasm among the popular masses. It is in these circumstances, and because the comrades of our tendency felt that reunification might permit us to surmount the enormous difficulties provoked by this wave of chauvinism, that unity was achieved between our two factions." This occurred in 1946.¹⁰

Unification of the two groups did not end the decline of the postwar Belgian Trotskyist movement. The Parti Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs, the unified group, continued to dwindle.¹¹ Emile Van Ceulen, one of the principal postwar Trotskyist leaders, estimated that by 1950 the group did not have more than twenty members.¹²

In 1950 the remaining Trotskyists decided that their only chance to reconstruct their movement was through a new entrism attempt in the Parti Socialiste Belge (psb), the Second International's post World War II affiliate. Led by their two most important figures of the time, Ernest Mandel and Pierre Le Grève, they proceeded to enter the psb.¹³

At the time of this new entrism experiment the Trotskyists' intention was to maintain a small "open" group outside of the psb which hopefully would have its own clearly Trotskyist publication. In practice they had so few people that this proved impossible.¹⁴ It was not until 1962 that they decided to try to reestablish an open Trotskyist group, at the same time attempting to recruit Georges Vereeken (who had quit at the beginning of the new entrism period) for this undertaking.¹⁵

No difficulty was presented by the Socialists to the Trotskyists entry into the psb. The party was more or less open to anyone who wanted to join and be active. Before long the Trotskyists had considerably expanded their following and had acquired positions of leadership in some parts of the psb.

This was particularly the case in the Jeune Garde Socialiste (JGS), the PSB's youth organization. There, under the leadership of Emile Van Ceulen, the Trotskyists had largely won control of the organization by 1954. In that year Van Ceulen was elected to the National Committee of the PSB, representing the JGS (although he was a "youth" of thirty-eight at the time). He remained on the PSB National Committee until 1960.¹⁶

Van Ceulen delivered the principal political report at the JGS national congress of October 9-10, 1954. After surveying the economic situation at the moment, and reviewing the Chinese and colonial revolutions, the report opposed German rearmament. It argued that "the socialist movement must propose to the world of labor its solutions. . . . The historic objective of socialism is the destruction of capitalism (based on profit) and its replacement with an economy based on human needs."

The only part of this report which was clearly Trotskyist rather than left-wing Socialist was the large segment dealing with the USSR and Eastern Europe. It argued that "the USSR was born of a proletarian revolution," but that the backwardness and isolation of the country had allowed a "bureaucratic caste" to seize control. The policies of the USSR were a function of that caste's efforts to remain in control. Van Ceulen claimed that the development of the Soviet economy was "in contradiction with the maintenance of a bureaucratic caste in power. In this sense, a new period opens in the USSR."

Van Ceulen called for "democratization of the soviets and the unions, free election of managers of enterprises, and legalization of the WORKERS PARTIES." He called for "the regeneration of socialism in the USSR."¹⁷

The Trotskyists' line within the PSB was reflected in a speech by Ernest Mandel before the JGS of Liège. He was reported to have argued that Socialism in Belgium had not reached a "plateau." Rather, "the hour of

Socialism has sounded; far from being near stagnation, it must carry out the fundamental structural reforms which will permit it to open larger and larger breeches in the capitalist edifice and to hasten its crumbling."¹⁸

The Trotskyists strongly supported a move to the Left by the PSB in 1958 and 1959. The party congresses of those years adopted a new program calling for extensive nationalization measures and other elements of an advanced program, and promised that the party would never again enter the Belgian government except under circumstances which would make it possible to take energetic steps towards carrying out this program. In 1961, however, it decided to enter a coalition government once again, without any commitment by that government to carry out the PSB program. As Ernest Mandel said three and a half years later, the Trotskyists "supported and provided our modest contribution to the popularization of anticapitalist structural reforms after as well as before April 1961."¹⁹

The Trotskyists also became strong supporters of federalism. After World War II the division of the country between the Flemish-speaking north and the French-speaking region of Wallonia in the south, with bilingual Brussels in the center, provoked growing controversy between the Flemings and the Walloons. From about 1960 on national politics were marked by the growing influence of regionalist parties stressing the rights of the two groups. In the face of this problem the Trotskyists advocated ending the centralized form of government which Belgium had traditionally had, and urged the establishment of a three-part federation of Flanders, Brussels, and Wallonia.²⁰

Although operating after 1951 within the Parti Socialiste Belge, the Trotskyists maintained their Political Bureau and Central Committee, and even held annual congresses. These activities were, of course, quite "illegal" from the point of view of the PSB leadership, but they were conducted

more or less in secret and only once was one of their congresses "exposed" by an unfriendly journalist.²¹ The Trotskyists published a French-language weekly, *La Gauche*, from early 1956, and a Flemish-language periodical, *Links (Left)*.

The principal centers of influence of the Trotskyists within the *PSB* were in the French-speaking or Walloon area. Most of the time they had no organizations in Flanders. In 1961 Ernest Mandel, Wim Bossier, and Guy Desolre went to Antwerp where they were able to recruit two local people, and these five constituted the Antwerp organization of the movement for some time. Then in 1963 a cell within the Jeune Garde Socialiste in Ghent developed.²²

The high point of Trotskyist influence within the *PSB* and the unions associated with it was probably reached during the general strike of December 1960–January 1961. Ernest Mandel has noted that 30,000 copies of some of the issues of *La Gauche* were published during this period, that "its call for elected strike committees had success in several regions," and that the Trotskyists had "trade union influence among teachers throughout the country, Liège metal workers, Charleroi glass workers . . . textile workers and Flemish railroad workers."²³

The End of Entrism

Relations of the Trotskyists with the *PSB* leadership became increasingly troubled. Although it is clear that the Trotskyists did not publicly push a frankly Trotskyist program within the party, they nonetheless functioned as an organized faction. Also, the activities of Ernest Mandel within the Fourth International could not be hidden in spite of his frequent use of the pseudonym Ernest Germain. Another Belgian, Guy Desolre, became a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International when it was organized in 1963.²⁴ The *PSB* leaders certainly were not unaware of any of this.

According to Emile Van Ceulen, the *PSB*

leaders began to make some moves against the Trotskyists as early as 1960. But it was not until a demonstration against the *PSB* leadership during a parade on the occasion of the Congress of the Socialist International held in Brussels to celebrate the centenary of the founding congress of the First International in September 1964 that the *PSB* leadership moved to get the Trotskyists out of the party.²⁵

I witnessed the parade as a delegate from the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation of the United States to the Socialist International meeting. At the time I wrote about the parade that "the only jarring note was a fanatic group of alleged Young Socialists who broke into the parade at one point, shouting insults at the assembled dignitaries (including me) on the reviewing stand, and carrying posters urging that the Yankees leave the Congo, there be a Socialist Spain, and that Fidel Castro have a long life."²⁶

In fact, the *PSB* leaders had already begun organizing their own Socialist Youth group and had forbidden the *JCS* people to participate in the parade. Obviously the incursion of the demonstrators was a defiance of that prohibition.²⁷

The definitive showdown between the *PSB* leadership and the Trotskyist group came at the *PSB* congress on December 12, 1964, when the party leaders pushed through a resolution to the effect that association with either *La Gauche* or *Links* was incompatible with membership in the Parti Socialiste Belge. Ernest Mandel defended the position of the Trotskyists and their continued membership in the *PSB*,²⁸ but the measure was passed nonetheless, one-third of the Congress delegates voting against it.²⁹

Once out of the *PSB*, the Trotskyists and their allies organized a meeting at Liège on December 27, 1964, to decide on their future course. Presiding over the session was Fernand Dassart, a Socialist deputy from Namur. Other important figures at the meeting were Ernest Glinne, Socialist deputy from Charleroi; François Perin, professor at Liège

University and "theoretician" of the Walloon Popular Movement; Ernest Mandel, editor of *La Gauche*; and Jacques Yerna, secretary of the Liège Trade Union Federation, as well as the leaders of the JCS and the Socialist Student Federation.³⁰ This conference decided to set up three separate groups: Links (maintaining the periodical of the same name) in the Flemish area; the Union de la Gauche Socialiste in Brussels; and the Parti Wallon des Travailleurs in the Walloon area.³¹ This was done, apparently, largely on the insistence of François Piren.³²

All of those who participated in the Liège meeting did not agree with the decision to form separate organizations outside of the PSB. Many years later Ernest Glinne wrote that "although I participated in a meeting in Liège where the creation of a new party was discussed, for my part I never envisaged associating with this movement. . . . It was not I, who had never been a Trotskyist but rather a Left Socialist militant, who quit the movement, but rather those who had infiltrated our left movement calling themselves Socialists, but in reality being Trotskyites." Glinne remained in the Socialist Party, and by the 1980s was a Belgian Socialist member of the European Parliament.³³

The Trotskyists also ran into immediate problems in the Flemish region. All but two of those involved in putting out *Links* capitulated to the PSB resolution.³⁴ *Links* continued to appear as the spokesman of the more leftist elements in the Flemish branch of the Socialist Party, but with no further association with Trotskyism.³⁵ The two people who remained loyal to the Trotskyists, Joey Kruithof and Guy Desolre, began to publish another periodical, *Socialistische Stem*, which in 1969 was renamed *Rood*, a name it still had by the early 1980s.³⁶

Meanwhile, the Union de la Gauche Socialiste of Brussels was founded at a congress of 150 people, representing a dozen local units, on February 7, 1965. Van Ceulen was one of the chairmen of the meeting; Pierre Le Grève, regional president of the Teachers

Union, and Mandel gave the principal reports to the meeting.³⁷

The Parti Wallon des Travailleurs (PWT) was founded at a congress in Charleroi held on February 21, 1965.³⁸ Local units (federations) of the new party were established in most of the French-speaking cities and towns. By the middle of March 1965 the federation in Charleroi claimed to have 500 members.³⁹

The new Trotskyist groups were barely organized when they were faced with the question of participating in parliamentary elections on May 23, 1965. In Liège and Verviers the PWT put up its own lists of candidates. On the other hand, in Brussels and in the Walloon regions of Hainaut, Brabant, Namuroia, and Huy-Waremme the Trotskyists formed coalition slates with the Communist Party.⁴⁰ The Trotskyist candidates, Pierre Le Grève in Brussels and François Perin in Liège, were elected to the Chamber of Deputies.⁴¹

By the latter part of 1965 the Trotskyists had finally succeeded in establishing an organization in the Flemish part of the country, the Socialistische Beweging Vlaandere (SBV—Socialist Movement of Flanders). They had also established an umbrella group, the Confédération Socialiste des Travailleurs, bringing together the UCS of Brussels, the PWT, and the SBV.⁴²

In spite of what seemed a hopeful start the independent Trotskyist movement declined drastically during the next few years. One severe blow was the defection of François Perin who, according to Ernest Mandel, "quit the PSB as a left socialist; he collected votes as a petty bourgeois nationalist. Tomorrow he will become a strikebreaker when a strike threatens the 'union of all the Walloons.'" ⁴³ He ultimately became a conservative party leader.⁴⁴

The parliamentary elections of 1968 were a setback. The Trotskyists elected no members of parliament and got a total of only 9,000 votes throughout the country.⁴⁵ These included 2,693 votes in Brussels, which

compared with an estimated total of more than 5,000 in 1965.⁴⁶

The Revolutionary Workers League

With the formation of the Revolutionary Workers League in May 1971, the Belgian Trotskyists finally abandoned the "left-wing Socialists disguise" which they had maintained from the time they began their second entrant experience in 1951. The move to establish this new organization began with a congress of the Jeune Garde Socialiste in May 1970 which called for unification of the JGS, the Parti Wallon des Travailleurs, and the Union de la Gauche Socialiste. By that time the Trotskyists apparently had no group in the Flemish region.

The RWL took the names Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs and Revolutionnaire Arbeiders Liga in French and Flemish. Its founding meeting was reportedly "a congress of activists [sympathizers were invited only for the first day], a well-organized, smooth-running congress." It was addressed by Livio Maitan of the United Secretariat as well as by representatives of USEC affiliates in France, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and Luxembourg. The RWL decided to affiliate with the United Secretariat.⁴⁷

A few months after the establishment of the RWL it suffered a split. The leader of the dissident group was Guy Desolre, a member of the Secretariat of the United Secretariat since its establishment in 1963. He had growing differences with both the United Secretariat and the Belgian Trotskyist leadership, and in 1972 broke away with a handful of his followers to form the International Marxist Group (Groupe Marxiste Internationaliste—GMI). They began to publish a periodical, *La Brèche*, which for several years carried the subtitle "Journal du Groupe Marxiste Internationaliste—Quatrième Internationale."⁴⁸

Guy Desolre himself admitted later that he and his supporters felt sure at the begin-

ning that the GMI would soon become the leading Trotskyist group in the country and would gain recognition from the United Secretariat.⁴⁹ However, by 1976 they had abandoned all pretense that they had any association with the United Secretariat, and had changed the subtitle of *La Brèche* to "Revue Marxiste Révolutionnaire."⁵⁰ By 1980 the GMI had decided to go out of business.⁵¹

The RWL continued to participate in elections. In the April 17, 1977, poll the League ran candidates in nineteen constituencies—nine in Flanders, nine in the Walloon area, and one in Brussels. They received a total of about 15,000 votes. The Flemish organ of the RWL, *Rood*, editorialized that "these were very conscious votes. In order to vote for us, a person had to know our organization . . . had to understand our political point of view and agree with it, had to choose us out of four workers parties and had to reject all the arguments about 'making our vote count.'"⁵²

After the establishment of the RWL there was apparently a shift of the center of Trotskyist strength from the Walloon to the Flemish area. They lost strength in the Walloon cities of Charleroi and Liège, but gained modestly in Flemish centers.⁵³ A throw-away advertising *Rood* put out in the summer of 1982 noted the existence of RWL groups in Antwerp, Ostend, St. Niklaas, Louvain, Ghent, Hasselt in the Flemish area, as well as a Flemish-language group in Brussels.⁵⁴ An issue of the French language periodical *La Gauche* at about the same time indicated that there was also a party organization in Bruges, as well as units in the French-speaking cities of Charleroi, La Louvière, Liège, the Borinage area, and Verviers.⁵⁵

The Belgian Trotskyists continued to maintain their opposition to participation by the PSB in coalition governments with the "bourgeois" parties, and their support of federalism. With regard to the latter issue *La Gauche* on April 2, 1982 commented that "the federation that the workers of Flanders

and Wallonia want can only result from the resolute anticapitalist activity of the Walloon, Flemish and Brussels workers.⁵⁶

The RWL remained very active in the organized labor movement. Some of its members played important roles in the general strike of public service employees between September 15-23, 1983, against the austerity program of the Christian Social-Liberal government then in power. During the walkout the RWL insisted on the establishment of local "intersectoral" strike committees in the various cities, and were able to help bring those into existence in Antwerp, Aalst, Malines, Brussels and Louvain. They were particularly influential in the leadership of the strike in the Antwerp region.

The Trotskyists urged unsuccessfully that the strike be extended from the state-owned public services to the private sectors of the economy, and be converted into a general walkout. However, they did insist that for such a walkout to be effective it would have to be organized by the principal central labor organizations.⁵⁷

The RWL was very critical of the failure of the two major trade union groups, the Confédération Syndical Chrétienne and the Socialists' Fédération Générale des Travailleurs de Belgique, and the Socialist Party to turn the walkout into a political strike. They called for "a government imposed by the general strike, supported by the common trade union front. A government which pledges itself to satisfy all of the demands of the workers." The September 1983 strike was finally settled by compromise.⁵⁸

The youth organization of the RWL continued to be the Jeune Garde Socialiste. At the time of what was called the "third national congress" of that group in March 1983 it was reported that its membership had risen by 40 percent during the previous year and the number of its branches had doubled. It was claimed that "a majority is now made up of high school and technical students, young workers, and unemployed youth."⁵⁹

The seventh national congress of the RWL,

which met in February 1984, decided to change the name of the organization to Socialist Labor Party (POS-SAP). A report on this meeting said that "the congress which decided to form the POS-SAP broke with a certain tradition of having a political resolution based on a detailed analysis of the objective situation, in which the tasks of building the party were relegated to a small section at the end, with a few ritualistic formulas in the body of the text. This time the task of building the party was placed centrally in the resolution."⁶⁰

The specific immediate objective of the party, according to the political resolution, would be "to recruit and organize within and around the party several dozen vanguard workers from the working class and modify the party's organizational system from top to bottom to form these workers, often important trade union militants, into party cadres."

It was reported that the party had grown by twenty percent since the last congress. Also, 82 percent of the members were said to be "employees, and 22 percent . . . elected union representatives, some of whom have been elected to their regional executive committees."⁶⁰

Dissident Trotskyist Groups

In addition to the RWL, affiliated with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, several other Trotskyist organizations existed in Belgium dating from the 1960s. They were associated with other factions of International Trotskyism.

A Lambertist group, Groupe Trotskyiste de Belgique pour la Reconstruction de la IVème Internationale, was established in August 1968. It began issuing a mimeographed periodical, *Révoltes*. The paper's name was subsequently changed to *Tribune Marxiste*, and then in 1972 to *La Voix de Lénine*, which it still had a decade later. For a short while they also issued a periodical for students, *Informations Etudiants*.

During the short period in which the Lambertist international group and that headed by Nahuel Moreno were united, there existed in Belgium the Organization Socialiste Internationaliste, Section Belge de la IV Internationale. When the two international groups split once again, most of the Belgians stayed with the Lambertist international and kept the name Organization Socialiste Internationaliste. The supporters of Moreno established the Groupe du Ligue Internationaliste des Travailleurs. Guy Desolre estimated in mid-1982 that the Lambertists had between ten and twenty members.⁶¹ They issued a fortnightly photo-offset paper, *Action Ouvrière*.⁶²

The Posadas faction of the Fourth International also had a small group in Belgium for many years. Upon the death of Posadas in 1981, the group published a book about him. It seems likely, however, that the Posadas group, which was composed of people of quite advanced age, went out of existence soon after his death.

There was also a small group associated internationally with the Socialist Workers Party of Great Britain. It engaged in "deep entry" in the Socialist Party and published a paper, *Vonk (Spark)*, in Ostend.⁶³

Finally, Georges Vereeken once again formed his own organization when he broke for the last time with the principal Trotskyist group. In his last decade Vereeken was aligned with Michel Pablo's Tendance Marxiste Révolutionnaire, and his group was called Tendance Marxist Révolutionnaire—Section Belge. For a short while it established, together with the youth group of the Lambertists, the Jeunesses Révolutionnaires, a revolutionary Marxist center, to have theoretical discussions. The Vereeken people thought the two groups might ultimately merge as a result of working together. However, on orders from the Paris headquarters of the Lambertist international group the Belgian youth affiliate broke off relations with Vereeken's group.⁶⁴

The Vereeken group published a monthly

newspaper, *Le Pouvoir aux Travailleurs*, the same name the Vereeken faction had used during the war. In fact, the periodical carried the note on its banner, "First Appeared 23-3-1942."⁶⁵

Vereeken joined the campaign of the Healyites against Joseph Hansen and George Novack of the American SWP, accusing them of having been GPU agents. This attitude was the culmination of his conviction that his own problems with Leon Trotsky had largely been caused by known GPU agents, particularly Mark Zborowski, who turned Trotsky against him in the hope of weakening the Fourth International.⁶⁶

Vereeken's publication had a wider readership among Socialists, Communists, and trade unionists than the small number of his following might have indicated. It was first written by Vereeken, and then edited by his principal assistant, who corrected both its French and Flemish editions. The periodical appeared from 1966 until Vereeken's death in 1978, after which the group dissolved.⁶⁷

Conclusions on Belgian Trotskyism

Belgian Trotskyism was a branch of the international movement which at its inception took a major portion of the Communist Party into the Left Opposition. It was one of the few national Trotskyist groups to have members of the national legislature on at least two occasions. During the 1930s it was a largely labor-based movement and for some time had appreciable influence in the trade unions.

Ernest Mandel has summed up what he has seen as the historical significance of the Belgian Trotskyist movement:

It played a key role in the Charleroi miners' strike of 1932; it played a bigger role (because on a national scale) in the general strike of 1960-61. It played an even more important role in the public employees general strike of 1963. Of course, politi-

cally [electorally] our influence is less. But even if you estimate our electoral potential at 20,000 votes, this represents the equivalent of 500,000 votes in the USA proportional to the population. And it can fluctuate wildly, down and up, given the class struggle circumstances. In the main cities of the country, with the possible exception of Liège, we draw much larger crowds to our public meetings than the CP, sometimes even than the social-democratic party.⁶⁸

Trotskyism in Black Africa

Trotskyism first appeared in Black Africa immediately after World War II. It apparently was first established in Senegal and subsequently developed at least some organization in several other countries of the area.

Senegal

Right after the Second World War the French authorities took to Paris a substantial number of students to train to run the administration of what were then still French African colonies. Among these there were four Senegalese: Abdoulaye Ly, Assome Seek, Proctor M'Bow, and one other, who became associated in France with the Parti Communiste Internationaliste. When they returned to Senegal they established the first Trotskyist group there. They had to work within the party which then largely monopolized political activity in Senegal, the Parti de Rassemblement Africain. They increasingly abandoned their Trotskyist ideas and loyalties and ultimately joined the party of President Léopold Senghor, became ministers in his government and were lost to Trotskyism.

It was not until 1970 that a new Trotskyist movement appeared in Senegal. Perhaps as a reflection of that year's events in France, groups had broken away in 1968 from Senegal's Communist Party, the African Independence Party, which dominated the Senegalese labor movement at that time. Some of the dissidents were Maoist, but others were Trotskyist-inclined, and these established the Avant Garde Ouvrier (AGO) in 1970. However, within months the AGO had broken into two groups in a controversy over how to adapt Trotskyist ideas to local reali-

ties. Those expelled from the ACO formed the Groupe Ouvrière Révolutionnaire (GOR), which was soon the country's only Trotskyist organization.

In 1976 the GOR split over interpretation of the situation of Senegal's economy and society and how the Trotskyists should deal with that situation. One element argued that although there existed in Senegal a modern sector dominated by French companies with modern machinery and methods, and a sector which was sometimes referred to as "feudal," these were really part of the same socioeconomic system, since Senegal had been integrated into the world capitalist system. Although it was true, this group argued, that there was a Senegalese capitalist sector of small industrialists and merchants, it was subordinate to the big French companies even in agriculture, where what was produced and how much was grown was largely determined by the big French companies which bought agricultural products. Therefore, this faction of the GOR felt, emphasis should be placed on the class struggle of the workers against the capitalists, both French and Senegalese.

The other element of the GOR argued that both Senegalese workers and capitalists were exploited by the large foreign firms. Therefore, they maintained, there should be an alliance of Senegalese workers with Senegalese capitalists against the French imperialist firms.

The first of these factions broke away from the GOR in 1976 to form the Ligue Communiste des Travailleurs (LCT). Although there was an attempt in 1977 to reunite the two groups it foundered on another issue, the attitude toward the Communists and the Soviet Union. The LCT argued that the Communists were not progressive and that the Soviet Union, dominated as it was by a bureaucracy, should not be held up as a model, that, on the contrary, the Trotskyists should oppose both capitalist imperialism and the Communists and the Soviet Union. The GOR, on the other hand, main-

tained that because of the 1917 Revolution the USSR and the Communists still remained progressive, and the Trotskyists still should continue to appeal to the model of the Soviet Union.

The GOR became the Organisation Socialiste des Travailleurs (OST) and was accepted as the Senegalese affiliate of the United Secretariat.¹ It received legal recognition as a political party in 1982. Thereafter, it was a frequent participant in protest movements—some of which it organized, in others collaborating with other opposition parties—against the austerity policies of the government of President Abdou Diouf as well as against Senegalese collaboration with government forces in the civil war in neighboring Chad. In 1983 the OST supported Majhemout Diop, candidate of the African Independence Party (the principal pro-Moscow Communist group) in presidential elections. Its periodical was named *Combat Ouvrier* and was reported to appear "several times a year" and to have a circulation of three to four thousand copies an issue.²

In an interview early in 1985 one of the leaders of the OST, identified only as Belo, commented that "in 1979, most of the organization's forces were in the student movement. But since then we have established a presence in all the trade unions, in leadership positions. We held the post of general secretary in the UTIS union federation. Last week, a member of our Political Bureau was elected deputy general secretary of the University Teachers Union. We have intermediate leadership positions among the airport staff, in the Democratic Union of Technicians of Senegal (sdts). In addition we have leadership responsibilities among the ranks, some members are union delegates."

The OST spokesman also indicated certain modifications of the party's strategic approach: "The discussion that we are conducting on the role of the party involves a reexamination and a rejection of a certain scholastic understanding of Marxism or of a

Trotskyism centered primarily on the proletariat. . . ."

The OIS leader went on to explain that "the fundamental class in Senegal is the proletariat. But the dominant class, on the physical and social level, remains the petty bourgeoisie, both rural and urban. It is impossible in these conditions to build a party with popular social roots while skirting the question of bourgeois participation. . . . The party that we want to build, in certain social strata will be largely of a petty-bourgeois peasant origin. But it will be proletarian in its program and strategic aims."³

The Ligue Communiste des Travailleurs became the Senegal affiliate of the Committee of Organization for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI), the Lambertistes. It claimed in 1982 to be the larger of the two Trotskyist groups. It had one member of the leadership of the national labor confederation as well as leaders of the railroaders and food workers, and controlled the organization of high school students.

Mauritius

In addition to its Senegalese party, the Lambertist tendency claimed affiliates in Ivory Coast, Mauretania, Upper Volta, Benin, and Burundi.⁴ The principal French-language publication of the United Secretariat indicated early in 1984 the formation of a party of its orientation in Mauritius, the island republic in the Indian Ocean. This was the Organisation Militante des Travailleurs (OMT). It was established in January 1984 by dissidents from the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM), theretofore the country's principal left-wing party. Led by Serge Rayapoule, a former member of the Central Committee of the MMM, its first congress declared its intention to form "a true revolutionary party" and said that "our struggle is then a struggle for socialism, that is to say, to make the island of Mauritius a democratic Republic of the working people." The congress proposed nationalization

of the sugar industry (providing 75 percent of the island's exports and 25 percent of its employment) as well as of the banks and insurance companies, all of which should be placed "under the control of the workers."

The OMT also organized a kind of front group from what had been the National Anti-Unemployment Front, the FNAS. Its task was described as being that of "a school of socialism for all those who belong to it," and "to permit its members to have an apprenticeship in political struggle, and an apprenticeship in true workers democracy."⁵

Nigeria

There was apparently some effort to establish a Trotskyist movement in Nigeria in the 1960s. The Resolution on Africa adopted by the Second Congress After Reunification of the United Secretariat in December 1965 reported "the creation of the first Trotskyist nucleus integrated in the mass movement and trying to influence it in a revolutionary direction" in Nigeria.⁶

About the same time there were indications of some Trotskyist activity in Nigeria on the part of what was then the joint Healyite-Lambertist International Committee of the Fourth International. A report by the Socialist Labor League of Great Britain in May 1967 on what had happened since the Third Congress of the IC a year earlier noted that "a Nigerian comrade visited Britain after the International Conference of 1966, and travelled to Europe. He reported the work of the Nigerian group to a meeting of the IC. The British section undertook to provide regular financial assistance to the section at £50 a month."⁷ We have no further information available on these Nigerian groups.

Miscellaneous Groups

Finally, mention should be made of the African Union of Communist International Workers, a group associated with the Lutte

Ouvrière tendency in France. This organization was made up of African workers resident in France, and there is no evidence that it had by the mid-1980s been able to establish any counterparts in the Black African nations. In an undated "Manifesto of the African Union of Communist International Workers to the Workers, to the Poor Peasants, to the Unemployed, to all the Exploited and Oppressed of Africa," probably issued in 1982, the group indicated its political line. It said that "revolutionary workers say to all those who wish to fight against the dictator, the landlords, imperialism, even if only for the moment or only partially, that they are ready to fight side by side with anyone, by any means necessary. But the revolutionary workers will in no case give up the leadership of the fight. Only the workers have at the same time the interest and the possibility of pushing the fight against the old world of exploitation and oppression all the way to the end. . . ."⁸

Trotskyism in Bolivia

For a few years in the 1950s Bolivian Trotskyism was the most powerful Latin American section of the movement. Together with the Lanka Sama Samaja of Ceylon, it was one of the two national Trotskyist groups anywhere to become a major actor in its country's national politics. It subsequently splintered into a variety of factions and ceded its position as the most powerful element on the Bolivian far left to the Stalinists.

The Beginnings of Bolivian Trotskyism

The founder of Bolivian Trotskyism was Gustavo Navarro, better known as Tristán Marof. He was a one-time Bolivian diplomat who had abandoned diplomacy to return to Bolivia in 1926 to found a Partido Socialista, which was generally aligned with, but not formally affiliated to, the Communist International. It fell victim to the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay between 1932 and 1936, and Marof and most of his associates went into exile.

In Argentina, Marof first organized the Grupo Tupac Amaru, which had contacts with the Argentine Socialists, Communists, and Trotskyists. In December 1936 the Grupo Tupac Amaru coalesced with two other exile groups, the Izquierda Boliviana in Chile and the Exilados en el Perú in that country, at a congress in Córdoba, Argentina. That congress launched the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR—Revolutionary Labor Party), whose principal leaders in the beginning were Marof, José Aguirre Gainsborg, Alipio Valencia, Tomás Swar-

Unless otherwise noted material on Bolivian Trotskyism before 1969 is adapted from Robert J. Alexander: *Trotskyism in Latin America*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1973.

key, Lucio Mendivil, and Ernesto Ayala Mercado.

At its inception, the POR was not completely Trotskyist. The principal advocate of Trotskyism at its founding congress was José Aguirre Gainsborg, who was mainly responsible for the congress' decision to align the new party with the International Left Opposition.

Shortly after the end of the Chaco War, power was seized by Colonel David Toro, who established what he called a "Socialist Republic" and organized the Partido Socialista del Estado as its only legal party. Some of the Trotskyites, notably Aguirre Gainsborg and Arze Loureiro, returned home after Toro's coup and participated, along with José Antonio Arze and Ricardo Anaya (who were later to become the country's major Stalinist leaders), in organizing the Bloque de Izquierda Boliviana. The Bloque entered the government party, and Arze Loureiro became an important secondary figure in the regime. However, Aguirre Gainsborg soon fell afoul of the Toro government and again went into exile, this time in Chile.

When, early in 1938, Colonel Germán Busch overthrew Toro, virtually all of the POR exiles returned home. Tristán Marof soon became an important figure in the Busch regime, a fact which led to a split in the ranks of the POR.

At the second congress of the POR in October 1938 there was a struggle between elements led by José Aguirre Gainsborg, who sought to have the party become a more or less orthodox Trotskyist group of tightly organized, well-indoctrinated revolutionaries; and Marof who, on the contrary, sought to convert the POR into a mass party, generally socialist, but without any official association with Trotskyism. When Marof was defeated in the congress he was expelled from the POR, and two years later he established his own Partido Socialista Obrero de Bolivia (PSOB), which succeeded in electing four members of the Chamber of Deputies, including Marof, in 1940.

The PSOB faction used its influence in the Busch regime to gain entrance into the labor movement. With the government's approval, they organized in August 1939 the first Miners Federation, with PSOB member Hernán Sánchez Fernández as its secretary general. However, this federation was destroyed by the government which succeeded the suicide of President Busch, which occurred only a few weeks after the miners' organization had been established.

The POR, meanwhile, had become the Bolivian section of the Fourth International. It is clear, however, that contact between the Bolivian Trotskyites and the International was at best tenuous—since Pierre Naville, in his report to the Founding Congress referred to the Bolivian affiliate as the Bolshevik-Leninist Group, although no organization of that name existed at the time in Bolivia.¹ Naville offered no estimate concerning the number of members in the Bolivian section.²

Only two months after the congress at which Tristán Marof was ousted, the Third Congress of the POR was held. It adopted a party program and statutes. The program endorsed the orthodox Trotskyist position that in a country like Bolivia the tasks of the democratic revolution could only be carried out by a dictatorship of the proletariat, which at the same time would take the first steps toward building socialism. It also endorsed the theory of permanent revolution on an international scale, emphasizing that the revolution in Bolivia could and would only be part of the worldwide revolution. In terms of organization, the statutes of the POR provided for democratic centralism, the establishment of "cells" based on members' places of work rather than residence, and provision for the setting up of POR "fractions" in the trade unions.

The POR suffered a major setback only a few weeks after the Third Congress when José Aguirre Gainsborg was killed in an auto accident. It was to be several years before a new leadership emerged which was able to

make the POR a significant force in the labor movement and in general Bolivian politics.

The Rise and Decline of Bolivian Trotskyism

During the early 1940s the Partido Obrero Revolucionario first began to gain some influence among the tin miners, the country's principal proletarian group. This was due largely to the leadership and work of Guillermo Lora, a young man who had been won to Trotskyism while still a university student and who emerged in the years following the death of José Aguirre Gainsborg as the principal leader of the POR.

With the coming to power, in a December 1943 coup, of the government of Major Guaberto Villarroel, the POR was presented with new opportunities. The Miners Federation was revived with the encouragement of the new regime. The principal political groups represented in the leadership of the revived Federation were the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) and the POR. The MNR had been a partner with a group of young military officers in the coup of December 1943 and it was represented in the government during most of the Villarroel regime.

The executive secretary of the Mining Federation during most of this period was Juan Lechín Oquendo, a member of the MNR. (He was to remain the Miners' executive secretary for more than forty years.) Although the POR fought bitterly against the MNR within the Miners Federation during the Villarroel period, it usually exempted Lechín from its attack on his party and a rather special relationship developed between the POR and the miners' chief.

With the overthrow of the Villarroel regime in July 1946, relations between the POR and the MNR became closer. In elections in January 1947 a Miners Bloc was formed which included elements of these two parties, and it succeeded in electing Juan Lechín and a Trotskyist, Lucio Mendivil, as sena-

tors, as well as four Movimientistas and three members of the POR to the Chamber of Deputies. One of these POR members was Guillermo Lora.

Meanwhile, the Miners Federation had held an extraordinary congress in the town of Pulacayo in November 1946. That congress adopted a thoroughly Trotskyist statement of principles for the Miners Federation, which came to be known as the Pulacayo Thesis. It proclaimed the inexorable nature of the class struggle and specifically endorsed the concept of permanent revolution in which the dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the peasants and lower middle class, would simultaneously carry out the bourgeois-democratic and socialist revolutions.

The Trotskyist nature of the Pulacayo Thesis in no way meant that the Miners Federation had come under the control of the POR. The MNR continued after the congress, as before it, to have a majority on the Executive Committee of the organization, with Juan Lechín continuing as its executive secretary. What occurred was that Juan Lechín, never a man particularly interested or versed in revolutionary theory, turned over the elaboration of this essentially philosophical and political document to his POR allies—an action which in later years he came to regret, because it gave rise to recurring but unfounded charges that he himself was a Trotskyist.

In the MNR-POR alliance which continued during the so-called "Sexenio," that is, the nearly six years between the overthrow of Villarroel and the Bolivian National Revolution of April 1952, the POR remained the junior partner. Aside from organizational weaknesses of the Trotskyists, which they themselves subsequently admitted, there were three principal reasons for the MNR emerging from the Sexenio as the overwhelmingly largest party of the country (whereas the POR, although to some degree also becoming a "mass party," remained much smaller and less influential). First, the

very severe persecution of the MNR by successive governments between 1946 and 1952 created an aura of martyrdom around it and a reputation among the masses of its being their major advocate and supporter. Second, the MNR, as a frankly multi-class party seeking to represent not only urban workers and miners but also the peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie—in a country 80 percent of whose population were peasants—had a much wider attraction than the very “proletarian-oriented” POR.

Finally, the almost total collapse of the pro-Stalinist Partido de Izquierda Revolucionaria (PIR) during this period played into the hands of the MNR, not the POR. The PIR, which although not avowedly Stalinist contained within it all of those people who were, had bitterly opposed the Villarroel government, supported its overthrow, and participated in most of the governments between 1946 and 1952. As a consequence, the PIR lost virtually all of its working-class constituency, particularly among the railroad workers and urban factory and artisan workers. These people were well inoculated ideologically against Trotskyism, and when they abandoned the PIR their natural choice of a new party was the MNR.

With the triumph of the MNR-led Bolivian National Revolution in April 1952 the Partido Obrero Revolucionario reached the high point of its membership and influence. Yet the power of the POR between April and October 1952 was more apparent than real. That power virtually disappeared overnight the first time the POR seriously sought to challenge the position of the MNR government.

In retrospect, it is clear that the POR leaders saw the Bolivian situation of 1952 through the prism of the Russian Revolution of 1917. They saw Victor Paz Estenssoro, the MNR chief whom the revolution made president, as the Bolivian Kerensky; and they saw themselves as the Bolsheviks who soon would wrest power from Paz Estenssoro and the MNR as Lenin and Trotsky

thirty-five years earlier had taken power from Kerensky and his Menshevik and Social Revolutionary supporters. But Bolivia in 1952 was not Russia of 1917.

During the six months of the POR's greatest influence its apparent power was the result of the position which it enjoyed in the organized labor movement. Right after the revolution, virtually all organized workers were brought together in a new body, the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), of which Juan Lechín became executive secretary. During this early period of the COB, its affairs were handled in a peculiar way. At least one evening a week an “Ampliado” of the Central Obrera met to debate issues and make proclamations on behalf of the organization. Ostensibly, all affiliates of the organization, those of the provinces as well as La Paz, were represented. However, the system provided for organizations of the interior, who could not actually send someone to each meeting, to name as a more or less permanent delegate someone who was resident in La Paz.

Through this system of “permanent delegates” the Trotskyists were able to obtain much more apparent influence than they actually possessed with the rank and file. They succeeded in getting a considerable number of organizations to name Trotskyists as their permanent representatives in the COB. For their part, Juan Lechín and other leading MNR trade unionists were very much taken up with running the new government—Lechín himself was minister of Mines and Petroleum—and so were content, so long as the POR delegates to the COB ampliados did not challenge the MNR or the government, to let this system persist.

In October 1952 this house of cards fell in on the POR. It used its control of an ampliado of the COB to draw up an Open Letter to President Victor Paz Estenssoro opposing the section of the government's draft decree nationalizing the Big Three tin mining companies which provided for ultimate compensation for the expropriated companies.

The MNR reacted immediately. They called a new *ampliado*, seeing to it this time that enough of the POR "delegates" from the interior had been displaced by loyal Movimientoistas to give the MNR an overwhelming majority. That meeting reversed the decision of the previous one.

From then on, the MNR, not the POR, completely controlled the Central Obrera Boliviana. A few months later this author attended an *ampliado* which discussed the government's forthcoming agrarian reform decree, and the control of the meeting—with the three labor ministers of the Paz Estenssoro government (Juan Lechín, Germán Butrón, and Nuflo Chávez) on the dais—was overwhelming. Furthermore, the disdain of the three MNR ministers for the positions of both the POR representatives and those of the newly established Communist Party was clear for all to see.

This defeat of the POR in the Central Obrera Boliviana led the Trotskyists to reassess their position. It also led shortly to a splintering of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario. The struggle within the Fourth International between Michel Pablo and his antagonists, as well as the domestic situation in Bolivia, contributed to the split.

At the POR's Tenth Conference in La Paz in June 1953 a political thesis was adopted which admitted that the immediate objective of the party was not the seizure of power; rather, the party's task was to win over the majority of the workers and peasants to its positions.

This position of the POR soon drew the fire of the Latin American Bureau of the Fourth International, associated with the Pabloite International Secretariat. It also led to the formation of two tendencies within the POR. The Leninist Workers Faction, led by Guillermo Lora, supported the June 1953 position of the party. The Internationalist Proletarian Faction, led by Hugo González Moscósó, attacked it, aligning itself with the Latin American Bureau.

By November 1954 the factional situation

was such that Guillermo Lora began publishing a newspaper, *Masas*, in competition with *Lucha Obrera*, which had been the official organ of the POR and was by then controlled by the González Moscósó group. Ultimately the two groups broke into two distinct parties, both using the name Partido Obrero Revolucionario. The González Moscósó group was accepted by the International Secretariat as its Bolivian section. The Guillermo Lora POR, although sympathizing with the International Committee (with which the Socialist Workers Party of the United States was associated) apparently did not join that group.

Certainly one issue of dispute between the two POR factions was the attitude to be assumed toward the MNR. The Lora group generally took the position of trying to cooperate with the left wing of the MNR, headed by Juan Lechín, the González Moscósó group wanted nothing at all to do with any element in the MNR.

Meanwhile, an even more important split had taken place in the POR. A group of its leading trade unionists, headed by Edwin Moller, quit the Trotskyist ranks altogether in 1954 and joined the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario. There they worked closely with Juan Lechín and the left wing of the MNR. When in 1963 Lechín broke with the MNR upon being denied its presidential nomination, the ex-Trotskyist trade unionists became part of Lechín's new Partido Revolucionario de la Izquierda Nacionalista.

The weakness to which the Trotskyists had been reduced was shown in the 1956 general election. Hugo González Moscósó, who apparently had the backing of both factions of the POR, received only 2,239 votes for president. This compared with 786,729 received by the victorious MNR nominee, Hernán Siles, and with 12,273 which the Stalinist candidate received.

A further split took place in the Bolivian Trotskyist ranks in the early 1960s. The González Moscósó faction went along with

the merger of international Trotskyist forces which produced the United Secretariat in 1963. However, a dissident element broke away under the leadership of Amadeo Vargas to establish the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), which became associated with the version of the Fourth International headed by the Argentine, J. Posadas. It remained the smallest of the three groups claiming loyalty to International Trotskyism.

During the 1960s new sources of controversy arose between the Lora and González Moscósó PORs. Guillermo Lora's group strongly opposed resorting to guerrilla warfare in Bolivia and denounced the guerrilla operation of Che Guevara in the country in 1966-67. In contrast, the González Moscósó POR openly endorsed the Guevara effort, although there is no indication that they had any part in it. Subsequently, they undertook guerrilla operations of their own during the brief General Alfredo Ovando administration (1969-70).

By the end of the 1960s, all three of the PORs were more or less marginal in Bolivian politics. Both the Lora and González Moscósó groups continued to have some lingering influence among the miners, but in no sense were any of the three groups any longer a mass party.

Bolivian Politics in the 1970s and Early 1980s

At the end of the 1960s Bolivian Trotskyism continued to be divided into three factions: the Posadista Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR) led by Guillermo Lora, and the POR headed by Hugo González Moscósó and affiliated with the United Secretariat. During the following decade and a half several new factions made their appearance.

Bolivian politics was particularly turbulent during this period, and the Trotskyist parties as well as all other Bolivian political groups were faced with many problems of

both tactics and strategy to deal with the confused state of the nation's affairs. President René Barrientos died in an airplane accident early in 1969, and was succeeded by his vice president, Luis Adolfo Siles (half-brother of ex-President Hernán Siles). A few months later, President Siles was overthrown by a military coup led by General Alfredo Ovando, who assumed a strong nationalist and "socialist" stance. Ovando, in turn, was ousted by another military coup in October 1970, which brought to the presidency General Juan José Torres. During the Torres regime, which lasted about ten months, there came into existence a "Popular Assembly" (Asamblea Popular) composed of labor and peasant organizations and most of the radical left parties, at least some of which regarded the Assembly as a kind of "soviet."

The Torres regime was overthrown in August 1971 by still another coup, headed by Colonel Hugo Banzer and supported at its inception by the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement and its bitter enemy, the Falange Socialista Boliviana. Banzer's regime lasted until mid-1978, although by then it was a conservative military dictatorship. Elections were held in July 1978 and Banzer's candidate, Colonel Juan Pereda, was declared elected, but this was challenged by the opposition. Pereda resolved the problem by seizing power but was himself overthrown three months later by "constitutional" officers headed by General David Padilla, who presided over new elections in July 1979.

Neither major candidate in those elections—former President Víctor Paz Estenssoro and former President Hernán Siles—had the constitutionally required majority, and Congress elected ex-MNR leader Walter Guevara Arce as provisional president. He was overthrown three months later by a new military coup led by General Alberto Natusch Busch, which met very strong popular resistance. Finally, Congress elected ex-Trotskyist Lidia Geiler to the presidency,

and she presided over still further elections in June 1980.

The 1980 elections were still indecisive although this time the supporters of Paz Estenssoro were willing to vote for Hernán Siles when the election was thrown into Congress. However, Congress never got a chance to decide, since power was seized by General Luis García Meza, who presided over what was popularly known as the "drug smugglers' regime" because of the extensive role of some of its leading figures in the narcotics traffic. In August 1981 García Meza was ousted by General Celso Torrelio, who was replaced by General Guido Vildoso in July 1982. President Vildoso finally decided in October 1982 to summon the Congress which had been elected in 1980 back into session to choose a constitutional chief executive. It elected Hernán Siles as president and his running mate Jaime Paz Zamora as vice president.

The restoration of a democratic constitutional regime did not stabilize Bolivian politics. In the face of the catastrophic state of the economy, President Siles submitted to the demand of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for an "austerity" program, which quickly brought him into conflict with the labor movement, the organized peasantry, and the left parties (except the pro-Moscow Stalinists, who were in his government). In April 1983 the Miners Federation seized control of the state mining firm, COMIBOL, and in mid-1984, under pressure from organized labor, Siles suspended payments on the foreign debt and suspended the IMF austerity program.

In March 1985 the COB again launched a general strike against the government's economic policies. It lasted for twenty days, and the workers, particularly the miners, occupied the capital city, La Paz. The walk-out was finally settled by a sizable wage concession by President Siles.

Two months after the March 1985 general strike there were elections, called by President Siles a year ahead of when they were

regularly scheduled. Víctor Paz Estenssoro and Hugo Banzer were the two major candidates. Although Banzer obtained a narrow plurality in the popular vote, Congress had to decide, since no candidate got a majority, and it elected Paz Estenssoro, who took office in August. He immediately adopted a very stringent economic program which brought protests from the COB and the left in general, but the president refused to concede on these issues as his predecessor had regularly done.

It was against this background that the Trotskyist parties functioned from 1969 until the mid-1980s.

The Posadas Trotskyists in Bolivia

The small Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista) affiliated with the Posadas version of the Fourth International gave what might be called "critical" support to the government of General Ovando in 1969. Its periodical proclaimed:

The movement in Bolivia is a nationalist anti-imperialist movement, not yet structured, without a conscious leadership, full of contradictions . . . but which because of the historic, political, revolutionary conditions of Bolivia, in a short period, very short, will take gigantic steps, and internal struggles will permit us, the IV International, to head great mobilizations, even with all the limitations which this nationalist movement has. . . .

But now the struggle is not yet for workers power. Now is the immediate step of trade union and political reorganization of the masses . . . the immediate task is to organize the functioning of all the miners' centers . . . and of organizing, writing and applying the class and revolutionary program, and the worker-peasant alliance.

This same issue of the POR(T)'s mimeographed periodical carried a telegram which had been sent by the organization to the Soviet ambassador in La Paz. It read: "We

salute the Soviet masses. Hail the success of Soyuz and Intercosmos One. Forms indissoluble answer of USSR and other workers states to preparation counter revolutionary atomic war Yankee imperialism."³

The POR(τ) played no significant role in the events of the Ovando and Torres regimes of 1969-71. Undoubtedly, the party, together with all of the other far left groups, was driven far underground after the seizure of power by Colonel Banzer. The Posadista Fourth International still reported as late as December 1976 that *Voz Obrera* was being published by the Bolivian POR(τ).⁴ However, by 1980 Amadeo Vargas, who had earlier been the principal figure in the POR(τ), was reported as belonging to the faction of the POR which was affiliated to the United Secretariat.⁵

The Guillermo Lora Faction of the POR

In contrast to the POR(τ), the Bolivian Trotskyist faction headed by Guillermo Lora played a major role during the regime of General Torres (1970-71). During the several days of confusion which preceded the assumption of the presidency by General Torres, the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), the country's central labor organization, had established a Political Command (Comando Político) to direct the political activities of organized labor.⁶ The POR of Lora had members in the Comando Político.

According to Lora they were the element in the Political Command which steadfastly opposed General Torres's offer to have the COB represented in his cabinet. The POR led opposition to his original suggestion of one-third of the ministries, which the Comando Político turned down. It also fought against Torres's second offer of half of the ministries for COB, but POR was only successful in getting COB to insist, as the price of its participation, that it (rather than General Torres) choose the 40 percent of the cabinet who were to be from organized labor. President

Torres finally turned down that demand, and COB was not represented in his government.⁷

According to Lora, it was his party which originally proposed to the Comando Político the establishment of the Popular Assembly, although the official document approved by the Comando Político was jointly sponsored by POR and members of the pro-Russian Communist Party.⁸ POR also successfully pushed the idea that the Asamblea Popular consist principally of class organizations—workers, peasants and middle class—with a large preponderance of worker delegates, and that the number of official representatives of political parties be quite small. Defending this idea Guillermo Lora explained that "the intention was to prevent the petty-bourgeois parties from artificially increasing their influence, and it was thought that the popular parties would be represented in the Assembly through their militants in the unions and mass organizations."⁹

It was finally decided that there would be 218 members of the Popular Assembly, of whom sixty percent would be trade unionists, twenty-five percent representatives of middle class organizations, ten percent delegates of peasant groups, and five percent representatives of parties. The POR of Lora was one of the six parties which was allowed to have official representatives in the Assembly, in its case having two posts.¹⁰

The document establishing the Popular Assembly proclaimed that "the Asamblea Popular (supreme authority for the workers and their leaders) and the popular committees, will act as a unifying force of the people. The cited organizations are characterized by taking decisions about fundamental aspects of the life of the masses, at the same time putting into execution these decisions. . . . The Asamblea Popular, conceived of as an organ of popular power must be reinforced in Revolutionary Committees installed in work centers and neighborhoods."¹¹

The delegates to the Asamblea Popular

were supposed to carry out instructions of the groups which elected them. They could also be removed at any time by their electors.¹²

Guillermo Lora and his party regarded the Asamblea Popular as an embryonic soviet. He wrote later that it "began by defining itself as a soviet-type ["sovietista"] organization, that is to say, an organ of the power of the proletariat and of the masses."¹³ He claimed that "as the mobilization and radicalization of the masses accentuates, the force and authority of the soviet increases, and thus creates friction with the central government (dual power). The exploited come to their organization in hope of solving their daily problems and to this degree turn their backs on the official government. In the hallways of the place in which the Asamblea Popular met, one could see people who had come from all corners of the country to present their needs, complain of the excesses of the authorities, solicit construction of schools, etc. . . ."¹⁴

Although the Asamblea Popular existed only from April to August 1971, it engaged in several heated debates. In retrospect Guillermo Lora felt that two of these were of particular importance: that over the Popular Assembly's demand that the Miners Federation be given majority control over the state mining industry, and that over the establishment of a single national university, also under majority control of trade union representatives. The first of these issues, Lora felt, went to the heart of the issue of power in Bolivia, since workers' control of the country's principal export industry would give them control over foreign exchange, and, indirectly at least, over the whole economy. The second issue was important, he thought, because workers control of the universities would prevent them from being used against a workers government, and particularly from coming under control of "foco theory" guerrilla advocates who were then very influential among the students.¹⁵

The role of Guillermo Lora's Partido

Obrero Revolucionario in the Asamblea Popular subsequently became a matter of bitter dispute within International Trotskyism. The POR was particularly attacked by the Socialist Labor League of Great Britain, led by Gerry Healy, and this controversy was one of the major reasons for the breakup of the International Committee of the Fourth International in 1971-72. This controversy is discussed in the chapter on the International Committee of the 1960s.

In the process of the polemic in the International Committee the issue was raised as to whether or not the Lora POR was an affiliate of that group. Thus the British SLL and its allies within the International Committee claimed that when Lora "appeared in Europe in 1970, the Socialist Labor League made it quite plain it would not favor his admission into the IC unless a full discussion was held on his whole history and an understanding reached on this basis."¹⁶

However the French affiliate of the IC, the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, in a statement of November 24, 1971 claimed that "as for the POR in Bolivia, the issues are clear: an old Trotskyist organization, section of the Fourth International before the split of 1951-1952, the POR rejoined the IC in 1970 on the basis of its experience and its fight against Pabloism in Bolivia itself. It joined after a meeting of the IC which Comrade Lora personally attended. Moreover this was officially announced in *La Verité* . . . and was not denied by anybody. . . . The legitimate status of the POR was not challenged in the slightest by the SLL who wrote in No. 545 of its daily paper . . . that 'the POR is the Bolivian section of the International Committee.'"¹⁷

With the split in the International Committee the POR led by Guillermo Lora became part of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (COROI). It remained in that group until early in 1979, when it was reported that although Lora and the POR supported COROI's expulsion at that time of the Argen-

tine Política Obrera group, they nonetheless were withdrawing from CORQI.¹⁸ Thereafter, the Lora POR was not part of any of the factions of International Trotskyism although still considering itself a Trotskyist group.

After the overthrow of the Torres regime many of the principal leaders of the Lora POR, as well as those of other Bolivian far left groups, went into exile. In Santiago, Chile there was formed the Frente Revolucionario Anti-imperialista (FRA—Anti-imperialist Revolutionary Front), “as a projection of the anti-imperialist and revolutionary line of the Asamblea Popular” according to Guillermo Lora.¹⁹ Those groups which originally founded it included the Revolutionary Armed Forces (a group of army officers around General Torres), the pro-Moscow Communist Party, Juan Lechín’s Partido Revolucionario de Izquierda Nacionalista, the Lora POR, the González Moscósó POR, the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, the pro-Chinese Communist Party of Bolivia (Marxist-Leninist), and the guerrilla group Ejército de Liberación Nacional.²⁰

The Lora POR’s participation in the FRA provoked a controversy within CORQI. The French OCI was particularly critical of POR’s participation in that coalition.²¹ However at that point this controversy did not result in the POR’s breaking with the Lambertist international group.

The Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Front soon disintegrated. Guillermo Lora reported that it was defended “only by the Trotskyists” by early 1973. At that point, it was dissolved.²²

The Lora POR continued to be active in the underground, particularly in the labor movement. When a clandestine congress of the Miners Federation (FSTMB) was held in May 1976 there was a struggle between them and both the pro-Moscow and pro-Chinese Communists. *Intercontinental Press* reported that the Lora POR “carried on a victorious struggle to reaffirm the Pulacayo Thesis, a programmatic document of the miners federation and the COB which calls

for the establishment of a workers and peasants government in Bolivia.” The same source cited a report of the French Lambertist periodical *Informations Ouvrières* to the effect that “the renewal of the executive commission of the FSTMB was marked by another victory of the fraction of the POR. In the preparation of the congress, the POR had presented the need to get rid of the old bureaucracy and proceed to the election of new leaders. In the congress, the old leadership was accused of betrayal and complicity with the government of Banzer by the majority of the delegates.” It added that “the worst bureaucrats left the executive commission and various activists of the POR (Lora) won posts in the new one.”²³

There is no information available concerning the attitude of the Lora POR during the elections of 1978, 1979 and 1980. However, in the face of the crisis facing the regime of Hernán Siles after it took power in October 1982 the Lora POR called for a “proletarian revolution and dictatorship” and for the “Bolivianization of the armed forces” and “an army at the service of the working class.”²⁴ The Lora POR had some representation at the Sixth Congress of COB in September 1984 and was part of the coalition behind Juan Lechín which defeated the Stalinists at that meeting.²⁵

At the time of the twenty day general strike of COB in March 1985 the Lora POR was reported to have raised the demand for a “sliding wage scale.”²⁶

The Lora POR held its Twenty-eighth Congress a few weeks after the March 1985 general strike. There Guillermo Lora declared that “the working class, and therefore the POR, was not defeated in the last general strike. . . . This is our hour.” The political thesis adopted by the POR Congress declared that “the revolutionary situation is deepening.”

The Lora POR ran candidates in all constituencies in the June 1985 general election. However, they received only 0.79 percent of the total vote.²⁷

The POR-Combate

The faction of the POR which was affiliated with the United Secretariat headed by Hugo González Moscósó was often referred to by the name of its periodical as the POR-Combate. Its policies during the 1970s and early 1980s were markedly different from those of the Lora POR.

During the Ovando government (1969-70), the POR-Combate was primarily involved in "preparing technically for rural guerrilla warfare." Hugo González Moscósó wrote that "under the Ovando government the party operated in completely clandestine conditions and was totally absorbed in armed work. . . ."28 Joseph Hansen commented that as a result of POR-Combate's concentration on guerrilla activities "our comrades were not present in the united front that led the mass mobilizations and that created the Political Command" of COB.

Right after the installation of the government of General Torres the POR-Combate issued a call to the masses for three things: "Organizing a Revolutionary Command, including all political tendencies that favor a socialist solution to the country's present situation and support the armed struggle for power. . . . Creating a Revolutionary Workers' and People's Army. . . . Developing a body representative of the masses, through which they can express all their revolutionary power, initiative, worries, and determination to transform society."²⁹

The González Moscósó POR at first made little effort to participate in the potentially revolutionary organizations which were being mounted by other far left political groups and COB. Thus they argued that "The Political Command of the COB demonstrated its lack of understanding of the process. . . . Because of this, it is now necessary to form, either from within it or from outside of it, a Revolutionary Political Command, which in light of the previous experience can lead the masses to power and socialism." Joseph

Hansen commented that "needless to say, such a formation never came into existence."³⁰

Nor did the POR of González Moscósó participate in the beginning in the Popular Assembly. Joseph Hansen cites the report of two British Trotskyists who visited Bolivia at the time to the effect that "at first they tended to have an attitude of watching the Assembly to see how it turned out, rather than actually participating in it."³¹

The POR-Combate was not one of the parties which was given representation as a party in the Popular Assembly.³² It probably had at least a handful of party members who were elected by unions or other organizations.

Even when the POR-Combate decided to become active in the Popular Assembly it by no means heartily endorsed the organization. González Moscósó reported to the Parisian Trotskyist paper *Rouge* that "the left wing, to which the POR belongs, has developed the idea that the People's Assembly should be a body that would discuss national problems and solutions for them but would leave the power in the hands of the mass organizations (unions and popular militia or people's army). . . ."

Joseph Hansen noted later that "the list is an odd one; neither a popular militia nor a people's army existed. They had yet to be created. So, for the moment, that left only the unions, that is, the COB. But the COB provided the mass base of the Popular Assembly. And it was precisely the Popular Assembly that constituted a united-front formation through which the workers could draw the peasantry and the urban masses together in a struggle for a concrete form of a workers' and peasants' government."³³

Finally, the POR-Combate admitted the "soviet" potential of the Popular Assembly. But even in doing so it continued to push for the organization of a guerrilla army. In the May 1-15, 1971 issue of *Combate* an article said that "the Asamblea Popular can have no role except as an organ of dual

power. That is, it must not simply debate and watch over government functions; it must—as the expression of the power of the great masses of our people—decide the basic questions facing the country and the workers. The Asamblea Popular must become a workers' and peasants' government, and we must fight both inside and outside of it to achieve this. In this process a political-military instrument will grow up alongside the assembly which can serve as the power it still lacks to enforce its decisions."³⁴

Of course in its attitude towards the events of 1970–71, the POR–Combate was following the line advocated by the predominantly European faction which was then the majority in the United Secretariat. The year before this faction had persuaded USEC to adopt a general policy of fomenting guerrilla war in Latin America. The Bolivian events became a major element in the polemic then in progress between the USEC majority and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States and other groups within the United Secretariat which were aligned with it.

During the Torres period, the POR–Combate had several internal party meetings of some significance. One was a plenum of its Central Committee held over Easter weekend 1971. This meeting made several decisions including one "to intensify political work aimed at the masses in order to win them away from reformist influence and promote the emergence of truly revolutionary leaderships," and another "to intensify at the same time the party's military work and strengthen its military apparatus for the future actions that will be intimately linked with the revolutionary masses."³⁵ They also held two cadre training sessions in March and April attended by sixty students drawn from the party's regional committees.³⁶

The POR–Combate suffered severely at the time of the overthrow of the Torres government. Hugo González Moscósó reported that twenty party members were killed in Santa Cruz and three were taken prisoner in

Oruro. But he added that "despite the attacks it has suffered, the party is still functioning. . . . There is a military and political leadership united in the Executive Committee, which directs all activity on a national scale. We lost some stocks of arms, but during the struggle we captured some modern weapons."³⁷

The Bolivian USEC affiliate collaborated in establishment of the Frente Anti-imperialista Revolucionario organized by various exile groups in Santiago after the overthrow of the Torres régime. At the time the FRA was established the POR–Combate issued a statement which said: "For quite some time the organizations of the Bolivian left have felt the necessity of uniting in a front in order to put an end to sectarianism and to bring all of the revolutionary forces together behind a common program." Then, after noting the different points of view of various components of the FRA, the POR–Combate statement said that "it is necessary to make clear once and for all that revolutionary action has to be both political and military at the same time. . . . Political action without a military instrument has no perspective for taking power."³⁸

The affiliation of the POR–Combate with the FRA brought a negative reaction from the United Secretariat. It issued a statement in which it said that "the United Secretariat cannot agree with the POR's signing such a text, which is directly contradictory to the long-standing program of the POR. . . . The United Secretariat will discuss this and other questions with the POR leadership in a comprehensive way in the coming period. . . ."³⁹

During most of the Banzer dictatorship the POR–Combate, like all the rest of the far Left, had to carry on its work more or less clandestinely. Early in 1973 four POR leaders were jailed and tortured, and the police dynamited the door of Hugo González Moscósó's house—although he was not there at the time.⁴⁰

With the victory of a hunger strike,

mainly by women and with the backing of the Catholic Church, in January 1978 resulting in an amnesty for the political opposition and the calling of new elections for later in the year, the POR issued a statement on the event. It started out, "the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Combate) hails the victory of the hunger strike." The statement called for participation in the forthcoming elections, and urged the COB to take the initiative to "decide on a united intervention with lists of workers and peoples candidates."

Finally, this statement indicated a shift away from the guerrilla war line which POR-Combate had supported in the past. It said that "because of continual insinuations and attacks by the repressive bodies about past forms of struggle, which are used to justify new arrests, the POR believes it is necessary to make the following very clear: . . . the POR reaffirms that today it is not in any way calling for any form of armed struggle, and that above all it does not participate in acts of terrorism."⁴¹ This statement was in conformity with the shift of the USEC majority away from insistence on guerrilla war as the correct strategy for its Latin American affiliates.

In the 1978 elections the POR-Combate participated in one of the coalitions organized for the campaign, the Frente Revolucionario de Izquierda (FRI). This included also the pro-Chinese Communist Party, the Vanguardia Comunista del POR, and the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, the party organized by those who had participated a decade before in Ernesto "Che" Guevara's guerrilla campaign. However, the POR was subsequently very critical of negotiations by the FRI with the Paz Estenssoro faction of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, the Authentic Revolutionary Party of Walter Guevara Arce, and the Christian Democratic Party. The POR argued that its own role was to "generate . . . a new dynamic in the FRI while at the same time building up its own organization, rooting

itself among the masses, and winning new members in order to compete more effectively with its allies in the front."⁴²

In October 1980, shortly before the coup by Colonel Natusch Busch, the POR-Combate held a national congress. It was reportedly attended by about 150 "delegates and guests," and the attendance "confirmed that a great majority of the POR is made up of workers and peasants, and that the POR has also been successful in implanting itself in the student movement to a greater extent than in the past. Among those present at the congress were trade union cadres from the main unions, miners, peasants from the La Paz region . . . and a comrade who is a member of the national leadership of the COB."⁴³

During the 1980 election the POR-Combate at first formed part of a front backing the presidential candidacy of miners and COB leader Juan Lechín. When Lechín withdrew from the contest the POR denounced his action. It also announced that it had urged three measures upon COB to thwart a further military coup which was feared would follow or precede the election: "military organization of the workers and peasants; establishment of a program of struggle including broad nationalizations and workers control of the economy; and creation of a political alternative organized around the COB and the left parties."⁴⁴

At the time of the coup by General Luis García Meza in August 1980 the POR-Combate issued a statement which called for "a united front of the left and workers organizations. . . ." The statement said, "We are against the launching of isolated armed actions against the dictatorship in this period. We think that the priority task of the workers and their parties at the moment is the organization of the mass resistance. . . ."⁴⁵

In July 1983 the POR-Combate merged with another Trotskyist faction, the Vanguardia Comunista del POR, to form a new group, the POR-Unificado (Unified POR). There were present 150 delegates at the unity congress, including "miners, workers,

peasants, teachers, and students" from nine different parts of the country. The POR-Unificado was to publish a new periodical, *Bandera Socialista*.⁴⁶

The POR-U joined forces with several other left and far-left groups, including Juan Lechín's Revolutionary Party of the Nationalist Left (PRIN), to form the United Revolutionary Leadership (DRU) in March 1984. A few months later DRU "dealt a stinging defeat to the PCB (the pro-Moscow Communist Party) at the COB convention." However, the González Moscósó POR people themselves admitted early in 1985 that "the DRU has not yet been able to play the role of a national political alternative."⁴⁷

Other Bolivian Trotskyist Groups

During the 1970s there was further splintering of the Trotskyist ranks in Bolivia. There emerged, among other groups, the so-called Workers Vanguard (Vanguardia Obrera) and the Communist Vanguard of the POR (Vanguardia Comunista del POR). These two groups were described by a USCC source in 1980 as being "two organizations which claim adherence to Trotskyism and sent observers to the recently concluded World Congress" of the United Secretariat.⁴⁸

As the Banzer dictatorship began to fall apart in early 1978 the Central Committee of the Communist Vanguard of the POR put an advertisement in La Paz papers which called "on all Bolivians to form a revolutionary front capable of consistently carrying on the anti-imperialist struggle, thereby allowing the working class to carry out its leadership role in the Bolivian revolution."⁴⁹

During the elections of 1978 the VCPOR was a member of the Frente Revolucionario de Izquierda, to which the POR-Combate, the Maoist Communists and the ex-guerrillas of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores also belonged.⁵⁰ In the 1980 election both the Vanguardia Obrero and the VCPOR were among the fifty-two parties which were legally registered.⁵¹

The Morenoist tendency of International Trotskyism also developed a Bolivian affiliate. Unlike virtually all of the other Bolivian Trotskyist factions this group did not derive from the original Partido Obrero Revolucionario. Rather, it originated within the Partido Socialista headed by Marcelo Quiroga, who had been a minister in the Ovando government of 1969-70. During his subsequent exile in Argentina Quiroga had contact with Trotskyists there and developed some sympathy for Trotskyism. He permitted several other young people of avowed Trotskyist inclinations to work within his party upon their return to Bolivia with the end of the Banzer dictatorship.⁵²

There was first established, as a result, the Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores (OST), which was officially legalized as a political party in 1980.⁵³ In 1982 this party was reported as publishing a newspaper called *El Chasque*.⁵⁴

In January 1983, soon after the inauguration of President Hernán Siles, the OST published a series of "theses" on the then current situation in Bolivia. It called for workers control of industries, for a "worker-peasant alliance" and "a government of worker and peasant organizations which will guarantee democracy for the Bolivian people. It must be democratically controlled by the people and must also implement this program." Insofar as Siles' new government was concerned, the theses said that "as long as the possibility of a coup does not appear on the horizon, Siles will continue to be the worst enemy of the Bolivian workers, peasants and exploited urban masses. When the danger of a coup becomes a reality, Trotskyists should call for broad unity in action, above all with Siles."⁵⁵

In September 1984 the Morenoist Trotskyist group, then known as the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, had several delegates at the Sixth Congress of COB. These included representatives from the Teachers Union of Oruro and the Factory Workers Federation of La Paz.⁵⁶

The PST held a congress with 380 delegates present early in 1985. At the time of the COB twenty-day general strike in March 1985, the PST was reportedly the only group in the country which raised the slogan "All power to the COB." It was subsequently subjected to some harassment by the police and security forces.⁵⁷

Marcelo Quiroga was murdered at the time of the seizure of power by General García Meza in August 1980. Thereafter his party split into three competing organizations. One of these, the Partido Socialista (Bases), was Trotskyist in orientation and was also aligned with the Morenoist International Workers League (Fourth International). It was announced in mid-1984 that "the main objective of this new group is to build a revolutionary Marxist organization that will fight to give leadership to the Bolivian revolution in order to make the masses conscious of this process so that they can go on to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat." It proclaimed that "the COB is currently the only institution that represents the interests and the aspirations of the Bolivian working class. Revolutionaries who are fighting for the COB to seize power are those who want to finish the Workers Revolution that began in 1952 and which is still not completed." The PST was seeking to form a Trotskyist United Front with the POR of Guillermo Lora.⁵⁸

Trotskyism in Brazil

Trotskyism was early established in Brazil. Following the 1930 Revolution which first brought Getúlio Vargas to power it had appreciable influence in organized labor, particularly in São Paulo. Although oppressive regimes twice almost drove Brazilian Trotskyism out of existence—the fascist-like "New State" (Estado Novo) of Vargas between 1937 and 1945, and the military dictatorship of the 1960s and 1970s—it recovered both times. In its latest resurgence, since the late 1970s, it has perhaps had more influence than ever before, and several of the international Trotskyist tendencies have been represented in its ranks.

Early Trotskyism in Brazil

The first Brazilian Trotskyist leader was Mario Pedrosa. An important figure in the Young Communists, he went to Berlin to study economics in 1929. It was there that he first became acquainted with the details of the Stalin-Trotsky struggle in the Soviet Union and decided to align himself with Trotsky. So instead of going on to Moscow to study at the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute as originally planned, Pedrosa went to Paris where he became associated with the local Trotskyist group there. He also wrote a number of his Young Communist friends in Brazil, winning over several of them, including Livio Xavier, Aristides Lobo, and Hilcar Leite, to the Trotskyist side.

Another early Trotskyist recruit was Rodolfo Coutinho, a member of the Brazilian delegation to the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928, who returned from that meeting

Unless otherwise noted, material on Brazilian Trotskyism before 1969 is adapted from Robert J. Alexander: *Trotskyism in Latin America*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1973.

sympathetic to Trotsky. He and Pedrosa's friends finally established the first Trotskyist organization in Brazil, the Grupo Comunista Lenin (GCL), which on January 21, 1931 changed its name to Liga Comunista do Brasil and officially affiliated with the International Left Opposition.¹

One of the first efforts of the GCL was to try to win over to the Trotskyist ranks Luiz Carlos Prestes, the exiled leader of the "Tenentes," the group of young military officers who had carried on a two-and-a-half year guerrilla war in the interior of Brazil, attempting to arouse the peasants to rebellion, in the late 1920s. Although Aristides Lobo spent some months with Prestes in Buenos Aires during 1929-30, Prestes ended up joining the Stalinists instead of the Trotskyists.

Soon after the October 1930 Revolution the Trotskyists made substantial gains in the key industrial state of São Paulo. The principal figure there was Plínio Melo, a former Communist Party leader in Rio Grande do Sul who, after attending a meeting of the South American Secretariat of the Comintern early in 1930, shifted his base of operations to São Paulo.

Melo and other leaders of the São Paulo party were expelled from the Partido Comunista do Brasil as a result of efforts to obtain legal recognition from the first appointed governor ("interventor") of the state named by Getúlio Vargas. They obtained that recognition, and for several years shared with the anarchists the leadership of the labor movement of the state. Soon after their expulsion from the PCDOB, they joined the Trotskyists.

During the first years of the Vargas regime the Trotskyists had very substantial influence in the labor movement both in São Paulo and in Rio de Janeiro. In that period they used the name Liga Comunista Internacionalista.

In August 1933 the Brazilian Trotskyites again changed their name, to Liga Comunista Internacionalista (Bolcheviques-Leninistas). At that time they were publishing not

only the newspaper *A Luta de Classe*, which had been appearing since April 1930 as the group's national organ, but also *O Comunista*, put out by the Rio de Janeiro regional organization, and *O Proletario*, of the São Paulo branch. In addition they published a bulletin of international information, *Pela Quarta Internacional*.

In this period the São Paulo Trotskyists succeeded in organizing an Anti-Fascist United Front to confront the rapidly growing fascist party, *Acção Integralista*. This struggle culminated in a bloody encounter in the main square of São Paulo on October 7, 1934. That incident also provoked a split in the LCI with the expulsion, among others, of Aristides Lobo, Victor de Azevedo Pinheiro, and João Matheus, who had opposed armed conflicts with the Integralistas. The dissident group continued to use the name of the organization, although it reportedly broke with the international Trotskyist movement. It published several issues of its own journal, *A Luta de Classes*.²

In conformity with the opposition of International Trotskyism to the idea of the "popular front," the Brazilian Trotskyists at first opposed the Aliança Nacional Libertadora (ANL—National Liberation Alliance), which under the leadership of the PCDOB brought together most elements of the Brazilian Left early in 1935. However, they subsequently joined the ANL. Ironically, they were blamed by the Stalinists both for provoking and bringing about the failure of an armed uprising of the ANL in November 1935. The fact was that the insurrection was actually organized and directed by the PCDOB.

The insurrection of November 1935 gave the Vargas regime a chance to strike out violently against all left-wing parties, including the Trotskyists. The LCI, already greatly weakened by the previous year's split was largely confined to Rio de Janeiro, changed its name to Grupo Bolchevique-Leninista and continued to publish *A Luta de Classe*. In March 1937 it merged with a group of Communist Party dissidents led by

Febus Gikevate and Barreto Leite Filho who had opposed the November 1935 uprising. Together they formed Partido Operario Leninista (POL). POL continued to publish *A Luta de Classe* and *Pela Quarta Internacional*, the latter renamed *Boletim de Informações Internacionais*.³ During the 1937 election campaign POL put up the symbolic candidacy of Luiz Carlos Prestes.⁴

POL was represented at the Founding Congress of the Fourth International in September 1938 by Mario Pedrosa. He was known at that meeting by his party name, Lebrun, and took an active part in the discussions.⁵ Pierre Naville, in his report on "regularly affiliated organizations" of the new International, listed the Partido Operario Leninista in that category.⁶ He estimated its membership at that time at 50.⁷

In 1939 POL suffered a split over the question of whether or not the Soviet Union remained a "workers state," a majority continuing to hold that it was and the minority apparently withdrawing from the party. Mario Pedrosa, who had been elected to the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International at the Founding Congress, was one of the few non-United States members of that body who voted with the Shachtmanites at the time of their split with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States over that same issue.

Meanwhile, a new split in the Communist Party of Brazil had provided additional recruits to Brazilian Trotskyism. This split came in 1936-37 over the issue of the position the party should take in the presidential election which was supposed to be held at the end of 1937. A majority of the party leadership suggested that it put up the symbolic candidacy of Luiz Carlos Prestes, then in jail for his leadership of the November 1935 ANL insurrection. The minority favored endorsement of José Américo, a well-known novelist, who was the "official" government candidate.

At that point the Comintern intervened, supporting the position of the minority, and

the party officially endorsed José Américo. But the election was never held, President Vargas carrying out his Estado Novo coup d'état in November 1937 largely to avoid having the election and thus being forced to give up power.

However, the issue had by then split the Communist Party. Those opposed to the José Américo candidacy controlled the São Paulo organization of the PCdoB and refused to go along with the Comintern's orders. They were finally expelled from the party in 1937 and reorganized as the Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR). They quickly moved toward Trotskyism.⁸

In August 1939 the PSR took the lead in summoning what was labeled the First National Conference of Brazilian Fourth Internationalists. Those participating included not only the PSR but also the Partido Operario Leninista and some independent trade unionists. The meeting decided to unite "around the program of the Fourth International," had a long debate on "the international situation" and sent greetings to Trotsky.

Of course, under the conditions of the Estado Novo dictatorship it was exceedingly difficult for the Brazilian Trotskyists to function. However, from time to time it was possible for them to publish, either in print or in mimeographed form, two periodicals, *A Luta de Classe* and *Sob Nova Bandeira* (*Under a New Flag*).

Brazilian Trotskyism After the Estado Novo

Brazilian Trotskyism emerged from the Estado Novo in 1945 a great deal weaker than it had been a few years before. This was not only the result of persecution during the Vargas dictatorship, but was also due to the defection of most of the original Trotskyist leaders. The political atmosphere in the years after the end of the Vargas dictatorship was not very conducive to the growth of Trotskyism.

Mario Pedrosa, who sided with the Shachtmanites when they broke with Trotsky and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States in 1940, spent most of World War II in the United States. There he broke more or less completely with Trotskyism, aligning himself with the Socialist Party headed by Norman Thomas. Upon his return to Brazil at the end of the Estado Novo, Pedrosa rallied around himself most of the old-time leaders of Brazilian Trotskyism, including Aristides Lobo, Hilcar Leite, and Plínio Melo. They began to publish a paper, *Vanguarda Socialista*, which was clearly of Second International Socialist rather than Trotskyist inclination.

The Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR), the Trotskyist group which had been organized in the late 1930s, did survive. As the Estado Novo regime began to relax its hold in the latter part of 1944, the PSR called for the election of a constitutional assembly and the end of the Vargas dictatorship. When elections were finally held in October 1945, however, the PSR did not support the nominee of the anti-Vargas opposition, Brigadier Eduardo Gomes. There is no indication that they offered any candidates of their own in that election.

Although the PSR sought to penetrate the trade union movement once a more or less democratic political atmosphere had been restored, it found that very difficult. Trade union politics, and Brazilian left-wing politics in general in that period, tended to be dominated by the Communist Party and the pro-Vargas Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro, and at least until the 1960s the Trotskyists were not able to make much of a dent in either field.

The PSR ran some candidates in the 1947 municipal elections and were reported to have received a few hundred votes. By 1953 one ex-Trotskyist observer claimed that the party had "virtually ceased to exist."⁹

This was not entirely the case. The party had split in 1952 at the time of the division in the Fourth International. Herminio Sac-

cheta, who disagreed with the position of the majority, headed a dissident group which took the name Liga Socialista Independente.¹⁰ By 1959 the majority faction had taken the name Partido Operario Revolucionario (Trotskista). When the Latin American Bureau of the International Secretariat, under the leadership of J. Posadas, pulled away to form its own version of the Fourth International, the POR(T) became part of that group.

During the administration of President João Goulart (1961-64) the POR(T) was able to establish a small base among agricultural workers in the state of Pernambuco. Although the party's headquarters was in São Paulo, in the south, the party had dispatched Paulo Pinto (party name, Jeremias), a young trade unionist and Central Committee member, to the northeast to work among the agricultural workers who were being unionized there for the first time. He succeeded in organizing a peasant union in the municipality of També and also organized what was called the First Peasant Congress there in September 1963.

These Trotskyists shared the "prerevolutionary" euphoria which virtually all leftist groups in Brazil experienced in the months preceding the overthrow of Goulart on April 1, 1964. The POR(T) and its newspaper, *Frente Operaria*, issued calls for peasant invasion of landholdings and for the establishment of soviets, among other things.

Perhaps because of the extremity of their positions, the POR(T) experienced not only resistance from landowners and other conservative elements but active persecution by the Goulart regime and the state administration of left-wing Governor Miguel Araes in Pernambuco. Pinto (Jeremias) was assassinated while leading a strike demonstration in També, the Ministry of Labor canceled the legal recognition of the També union, and the Araes government jailed three of the POR(T) leaders.

With the overthrow of the Goulart government, the POR(T) was driven under-

ground, as were all far-left organizations. Although J. Posadas called on his Brazilian followers to organize a general strike against the new military regime, neither they nor anyone else was in a position to do so.

Sometime after the overthrow of Goulart, the POR(T) joined with the pro-Moscow and pro-Chinese Communist parties to form a Frente Popular de Libertação, in a pact signed in Montevideo. In spite of this pact, the POR(T) continued to be very critical of the two Stalinist groups.

Meanwhile, a split had occurred in Trotskyist ranks. In 1961 the Organização Revolucionária Marxista Política Operária was established. This was aligned first with the International Committee and then with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. It published a periodical, *Política Operária*, and was active during the Goulart regime to work among the peasants, particularly in the state of São Paulo.

Política Operária took a strong stand against collaboration with the government of João Goulart. Unlike most of the rest of the Left, it did not support the successful effort of President Goulart to get the presidential system of government (instead of the parliamentary form which he had been forced to accept as the price of being recognized as president by the military) restored in a plebiscite. The *Política Operária* group argued that the issue was of no real interest to the workers.

With the overthrow of Goulart, the *Política Operária* group was forced underground, where it sought to bring about unity of all professed Marxist organizations against the military regime. From 1965 on it was able to publish a weekly periodical which was said to be distributed in at least six states.

In April 1968 the *Política Operária* group merged with a faction known as Oposição Leninista, which had broken away from the pro-Moscow Partido Comunista Brasileiro. The new party formed by this fusion was the Partido Operário Comunista. This new party also maintained friendly relations

with the United Secretariat but did not formally affiliate with it.

The Reemergence of Brazilian Trotskyism

The government of the third military ruler of Brazil after the armed forces coup of 1964, General Garrastazu Medici (1969-74), drove the Trotskyist movement deeply underground and all but destroyed it. It was not until the last years of the administration of Medici's successor, General Ernesto Geisel (1974-79), that the movement was able to revive to some degree. When it did, at least four different groups claiming allegiance to Trotskyism made their appearance.

For some time the principal organization within which the Brazilian Trotskyists worked was the Partido Operário Comunista (POC), which had been formed in 1968 by a merger of the *Política Operária* group with a dissident "Leninist Opposition" faction of the pro-Moscow Brazilian Communist Party. In the beginning one of the principal Trotskyist-oriented leaders of the POC was Luis Eduardo Merlino, also known as "Nicolau." A young revolutionist, he tried to extend the organization from its student base to the working class in the São Paulo area. Merlino was said to have "joined the Fourth International," that is, the United Secretariat, and to have attended the 1971 congress of the French affiliate of the USEC. He was murdered by the police in July 1971.¹¹ The murder of Merlino was only one example of the severe persecution which the Brazilian Trotskyists suffered under Medici.

Although some USEC-oriented Trotskyists worked within the POC, that party was not a full-fledged Trotskyist group. The United Secretariat was quite critical of the group's "failure to formulate a tactical course," and to "constitute the practical alternative to the 'armed left' that it hoped to be." *Intercontinental Press* reported in July 1971 that "there is no organization in Brazil belonging

to the Fourth International or maintaining any special relationship with it."¹²

During the early 1970s there were other small groups in Brazil which had at least some contact with USEC. One of these was called Ponto de Partida (Starting Point) and was described by *Intercontinental Press* as being "a group of Brazilian revolutionists." It carried on a polemic with those elements in the Brazilian far left who were followers of the Che Guevara-Regis Debray "foco" theory of armed revolution.¹³

Other elements were the Organização Comunista 1 de Mayo and the Trotskyist Bolshevik Faction, which were described as "working to build a revolutionary workers party" in 1972.¹⁴ The Trotskyist Bolshevik Faction had been established in 1968 by a group in Rio Grande do Sul which broke away from the Posadas Partido Operario Revolucionario (Trotskista). During a particularly widespread sweep of the Medici security forces against the far left in 1970, virtually the entire leadership of that group was arrested.¹⁵

With the beginning of the relaxation of the military dictatorship during the administration of President Ernesto Geisel, new Trotskyist groups began to appear centering on a number of new publications. One of the first of these was *Independencia Operaria* (*Working Class Independence*), an underground monthly publication established in 1974. In spite of its name, this group apparently had its strength among university students.¹⁶

Independencia Operaria, in analyzing the results of the 1976 election, stated the group's immediate objectives. According to *Intercontinental Press*, it "calls on class-conscious workers to take the next logical step beyond rejecting the bourgeois parties in the elections: 'We must unite to defend our interests . . . building our trade union and political organizations' independent of the bourgeois parties."¹⁷

By 1978 this Trotskyist group was able to publish a legal monthly periodical, *Versus*, and had begun to issue a supplement to that

newspaper, *Convergencia Socialista*.¹⁸ It was around that publication that the first effort to revive a political party was made by the Brazilian Trotskyists.

In January 1978 a meeting of 300 people was held in São Paulo that established the political group Socialist Convergence. A second meeting of the group on March 19, 1978, attended by a thousand people, was said to have been "attended by representatives of opposition groups in the government-controlled trade unions, including metalworkers and chemical workers, student political groups such as Novo Rumo (New Course) and Ponto de Partida (Starting Point), artists, journalists, and members of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), the only legal bourgeois opposition party." The meeting adopted a twelve-point program including a call for a constituent assembly, total amnesty, freedom of press, and the right to organize.¹⁹

The Socialist Convergence group received direct personal support from Hugo Bressano (Nahuel Moreno), head of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores of Argentina and leader of the Bolshevik Tendency within the United Secretariat. He was among twenty-two people arrested by the Brazilian political police in São Paulo on August 22, 1978. Also arrested was another Argentine, Rita Strasberg, and a Portuguese Trotskyist, Antonio Sá Leal.²⁰ Sá Leal was released and deported to Portugal on September 6, after the Portuguese National Assembly had condemned his imprisonment.²¹ Moreno and Strasberg were also released later that month after an international campaign on their behalf and were allowed to go to Colombia, where they had been living in exile.²² Most of the Brazilian Trotskyists who had been arrested were released on December 7, 1978.²³

The splits within the international Trotskyist movement were reflected in the revived Trotskyist movement in Brazil in the late 1970s and early 1980s. There emerged at least four different groups, affiliated with the Morenoist, Lambertist, United Secretariat, and Posadista factions of International

Trotskyism. Each of these centered on a particular periodical.

Convergencia Socialista was associated first with the Bolshevik Tendency of the United Secretariat, then when that group broke with the USEC became the Brazilian affiliate of the International Workers' League (Fourth International), the Morenoledd version of the FI. It continued to publish *Convergencia Socialista*. It was credited by its USEC opponents with having had 500 members in 1978,²⁴ and in 1983 claimed a membership of about 2,200.²⁵ In 1983 Socialist Convergence established a youth group called Alicerce (Foundations).²⁶

The organization associated with CORQI, led by Pierre Lambert, was the Organização Socialista Internacionalista (OSI). A USEC source recognized that "it already represented in 1977 the principal combative leadership of the student movement in São Paulo" and noted that "it had as its central orientation the construction of an 'independent labor party.'" It first had as its publication *O Trabalho* [Labor], but after a split in 1979 in which a number of its people joined forces with the Brazilian USEC group, the name of the OSI periodical was changed to *O Trabalhador* [The Worker].²⁷

The United Secretariat's group in Brazil did not take any name other than that of the periodical with which it was associated. That was *Em Tempo*, which was established late in 1977. On the occasion of its fifth anniversary issue in 1982 it included greetings from George Novack of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States and Ernest Mandel of the United Secretariat.²⁸

Finally, there remained a tiny group of adherents of the Posadas version of International Trotskyism. Even after the death of Posadas that group continued to publish *Frente Operaria* as the "spokesman for Posadista thought in Brazil."²⁹

Brazilian Trotskyists and the Partido dos Trabalhadores

With the revival of Brazilian Trotskyism in the late 1970s all groups were soon faced

with the question of what their relations should be with a new phenomenon which appeared on the political left. This was the Partido dos Trabalhadores [PT—Workers Party].

The PT arose as a consequence of a new development in the country's trade union movement during the late 1970s. As a consequence of several strikes, particularly in the automobile industry of the state of São Paulo, there emerged a new trade union leadership which sought independence from the corporative state kind of government control over organized labor which had existed ever since the days of the Estado Novo of Getúlio Vargas.³⁰

Although the Geisel government finally stepped in and removed a number of the principal leaders of that movement from their posts, most notably Luis Inacio da Silva ("Lula"), the militancy of the São Paulo auto workers continued and to some degree spread to other workers throughout the country. Those associated with this new militancy then sought to do two things: establish a national central labor organization, for which there was no provision then in Brazilian labor law, and establish a workers' party.

At least three other elements in addition to the militant trade unionists played a role in the emergence of the Partido dos Trabalhadores. There were the "basic religious communities" which the Catholic Church had begun to organize in the late 1960s, and which for about a decade had been doing grassroots organizing and mobilizing of people in their neighborhoods and elsewhere to pressure the government to meet local needs. Another was the veterans of the student struggles of the 1960s, many of whom had been jailed, exiled and otherwise persecuted by the military regime, particularly by the Medici administration, and who by the late 1970s were seeking some other kind of political activism than the guerrilla warfare which they had unsuccessfully tried earlier. Finally, there were various older left-wing intellectuals who were attracted to the new political movement.³¹

The Partido dos Trabalhadores was established in 1979 and obtained legal recognition in the next year. Lula was transformed from a trade union leader into an important political figure, as head of the PT. Although the party did not do as well as it had hoped in the first election in which it was able to participate, the congressional and state poll of 1982, it nonetheless represented a very significant development both in the labor movement and in Brazilian left-wing politics.

The three principal Trotskyist groups—Convergencia Socialista, Organização Socialista Internacionalista, and Em Tempo—each reacted somewhat differently to the emergence of the Partido dos Trabalhadores. The Posadista group appeared to have been so isolated as to be little affected by the advent of the PT.

The Partido dos Trabalhadores followed a policy of allowing groups with different points of view to function within its ranks. At least at the beginning it welcomed the entry of any elements of the far left which would be willing to work to help build the party. The three principal Communist parties—the pro-Moscow Partido Comunista Brasileiro, the pro-Albanian Partido Comunista do Brasil, and the more or less Fidelista Movimento Revolucionario 8-October—all decided to have nothing to do with the PT and to orient their activities toward the largest of the opposition parties, the Partido Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB).³²

Each of the three principal Trotskyist groups, none of which had any significant base in the organized labor movement, tried to work within the Partido dos Trabalhadores, at least for a time. The approach of each of these groups was different. Before the appearance of the PT those who organized the Convergencia Socialista hoped that it could become a mass party, drawing both from the militant workers and from some left-wing elements in the official opposition party, the PMDB. When the Partido

dos Trabalhadores appeared, therefore, the Convergencia Socialista people hesitated before deciding upon an "entrism" policy in the new organization. However, in the latter part of 1980 the CS did launch an entrism policy and for some time closely aligned itself with the positions taken by Lula.

By 1982, however, the CS had become very critical of Luis Inacio da Silva and were attacking the supposed "Lulist bureaucracy" within the PT. It was explained that this meant "a privileged caste which originates in the working class . . . but which no longer belongs to the working class. It works as a sector united with the national and imperialist bourgeoisie to restrain the process of permanent mobilization of the masses, of a sector which considers Trotskyism as its fundamental enemy and which Trotskyists consider as their own enemy in the working class."³³

Although some leaders of the PT claimed that by 1984 the Convergencia Socialista group was no longer working at all within the Partido dos Trabalhadores,³⁴ it was continuing to work within the unions associated with the PT and the central labor organization they established in 1984, the Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT). One Morenoist source reported in mid-1985 that "in the 1984 Congress of the CUT, the Socialist Convergence was represented by five percent of the delegates, and received 15 percent of the votes on some programmatic questions. In addition, the Brazilian socialists recently won the election of the country's fourth largest and most important metalworkers union in Contagem/Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais."³⁵

The Organização Socialista Internacionalista, associated with the Lambertist CORQI on an international level, followed several different policies in the years following the establishment of the Partido dos Trabalhadores. Its first reaction was one of strong hostility toward the new party. A statement in September 1979 said that "born in a corporative union, grouping together the old

and younger yellow bureaucrats, the PT shows with each strike its true role: to maintain the corporative trade union structure, to break the strike movement. . . . It is a bourgeois structure which plays, alongside the Partido Comunista Brasileiro a role of supporting the dictatorship."

However, by 1981 the OST had changed its position; it had adopted a policy of entrism in the PT. A document prepared for its Fifth Congress explained that "our objective, with entrism, is to construct the revolutionary party; entrism is a tactic applied for a limited period, and the precise moment to put an end to it will be determined in the process of constructing the revolutionary party; the construction of the PT as an independent labor party is not contradictory to the construction of the revolutionary party."

A resolution of the OSI Fifth Congress in March 1982 explained further the group's position with regard to the PT. It said that "we Trotskyist militants struggle loyally within the PT for its construction and reinforcement as an independent labor party."

The attitude of the OSI by 1982 was described as "deep entrism." Its USEC opponents alleged that it was by then closely allied with the more right-wing elements within the PT.³⁶

The depth of the entry of the OST into the Partido dos Trabalhadores was perhaps reflected in the fact that the international organ of the CORQT edited in Paris was by 1984 publishing statements by the PT and interviews with its leadership without any reference to the CORQT's Brazilian affiliate.³⁷

The USEC group in Brazil, centered on the periodical *Em Tempo*, described its attitude toward the Partido dos Trabalhadores as being one of "neither entrism nor Scission." It explained that "A coherent struggle of revolutionary Marxists in the PT can only develop with the conception of them as the most resolute builders, the most militant, the clearest politically, the most defined from the programmatic point of view, from

the national and international point of view, the most 'Trotskyist,' for the construction of the revolutionary party is today inseparable from the progress in the construction of a mass workers party with its 400,000 members, its millions of voters, and in defense of its initial definition as party without bosses, socialist, and animated by wide internal democracy."³⁸ Thus, the USEC group would seem committed to the "deepest entrism" of all the Trotskyist groups.

By 1984 one non-Trotskyist leader of the PT professed to believe that, with the Convergencia Socialista group out of the PT, the other two Trotskyist factions were so deeply imbedded within the Partido dos Trabalhadores that their disappearance as identifiable Trotskyist elements was only a matter of time.³⁹

Bulgarian Trotskyism

Bulgarian Trotskyism lasted only about half a decade in the 1930s. It disappeared as an organized movement considerably before World War II and was not revived successfully after the war; Stalinist domination of the country made that impossible. No Trotskyist movement was organized among the Bulgarian exiles.

Bulgaria was one of the few countries where a pre-World War I Socialist Party joined the Comintern when it was first established. The pre-1914 Social Democrats had been divided into two rival organizations, the Broad and Narrow Socialist parties. The former, which was the larger of the two, became the Communist Party of Bulgaria and several Trotskyist leaders started their political careers as Broad Socialists.

In the early 1920s the two principal "popular" parties in Bulgaria were the Communists and the Agrarian Party, which drew its principal support from the peasantry who made up the majority of the population. In 1922-23 a radical Peasant Party leader, Stambulisky, served as head of government. However, early in 1923 Stambulisky was overthrown and assassinated by a right-wing coup during which the Communists maintained "neutrality."¹

Although not taking sides at the time of the overthrow of the Agrarian Party government, the Bulgarian Communists attempted their own revolutionary uprising in September 1923. When it was defeated the leadership of the party was dispersed, some going to Moscow, others being jailed and even killed. The Communists were persecuted even more severely in 1925 after a bomb exploded in the Sofia cathedral, an act attributed rightly or wrongly to the Communist Party's "military organization."

However, during the late 1920s and early 1930s Bulgaria was governed by a relatively democratic regime. During that period the Communists were able to function more or less openly through a front party. This situation was ended on May 19, 1934, by a coup which "established an authoritarian regime which proscribed all existing parties and political activity. The following year it was displaced by King Boris, who . . . instituted a royal dictatorship that eventually aligned Bulgaria with Germany."²

Origins and Evolution of Bulgarian Trotskyism

Following the failure of the September 1923 coup attempt by the Communists their party was characterized by extensive factionalism which continued for at least twenty-five years, until some time after they had won control of the country. To a considerable degree the schisms centered on the relations between those party leaders who had sought refuge in Moscow and those who stayed in the country. However, there were also other issues in the Bulgarian Communists' internal quarrels.

One of these was the struggle within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the resulting conflict within the Comintern. A minority of the Bulgarian party's leaders took the side of Trotsky in that struggle. Others ended up merging their struggles in the Bulgarian party with those of Trotsky in the USSR.

The first Trotskyist group to be established was set up under the leadership of Samnaliev, who established a cell in the town of Sliven in 1928. Samnaliev had been expelled from the Communist Party, apparently for opposing the attempted uprising in September 1923.

Meanwhile, other expellees from the party were moving in a Trotskyist direction. The two most important were Stefan Manov and Sider Todorov. Both of these men had belonged to the pre-World War I Broad So-

cialist Party and had been expelled from the CP for denouncing the September 1923 insurrection. In February 1927 Manov established a short-lived Independent Socialist Party which began publishing a periodical, *Nov Pat* (*New Road*). Most of the leaders and members of that party joined the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party, but Manov and Todorov did not, and in 1931 they took the lead in organizing the Left Marxist Opposition as the Bulgarian section of the international Trotskyist movement.

Other leading figures in the Trotskyist movement included Eodorov, Spas Zdgorski, who in 1920 had been a leader of an ultraleft Communist Workers Party formed in protest against a rightward lurch in Communist Party policy but had subsequently been readmitted to the official CP, and Dimitar Gatchev.³

Gatchev's first political affiliation had been with the German Communist Party, at the age of twenty-one, while studying in that country in 1921. Returning to Bulgaria in 1923, he had been named head of the "military organization" of the Bulgarian Communist Party. He was arrested and "savagely tortured" in 1925, after which he was sentenced to death. His sentence was commuted, and he remained in jail until 1932. He had meanwhile been expelled from the Communist Party because of his support of the Russian Left Opposition and joined the Left Marxist Opposition when he got out of prison if not earlier.⁴

Early in 1931 the Bulgarian Trotskyists began to publish a periodical, *Osvobozhdenie* (*Liberation*). They claimed to have a circulation of one thousand for this publication, but an historian of the Bulgarian Communist movement writes that the irregularity of the appearance of *Osvobozhdenie* "suggests that the Trotskyist group was small and poor."⁵

Joseph Rothschild has noted that "the Trotskyists condemned as futile, irresponsible and dangerous the tactics—so beloved by the left sectarians—of street riots and

strike violence. The slogan of 'dominate the streets' was denounced as an imbecility, and the policy of political strikes as an invitation to the police to destroy the trade unions." He added that "here the Trotskyists' evaluation was less unrealistic than that of the Communist leadership at that time, but their belief that a 'pure' proletarian policy would be more fruitful was utopian or meaningless."⁶

The Trotskyists worked with a Communist Party front group variously translated as Labor Party and Workers Party. This had been established in 1927 as a result of a rightward turn of the party after the failure of the 1923 insurrection. Until 1934 it was able to function openly without serious interruption by the government authorities.

Concerning the operations of the Trotskyists in the Labor Party, Joseph Rothschild has noted that since they were "a small minority," they consequently "naturally demanded greater freedom to criticize the leadership of both the Labor Party and the Independent Trade Union Federation." Citing Lenin, they called for "liberation of the rank and file Communist and trade union militants from the 'political illiterates,' 'bureaucratic mandarins' and 'Stalinist cretins' who allegedly controlled the Communist Party." Rothschild adds that "had the Trotskyists been in a majority, they would as easily have found a contrary, yet equally authoritative passage in Lenin's writings."

Rothschild noted that the regime's police did not make nice distinctions between Stalinist and Trotskyist Communists. They were "herded indiscriminately into the same prison compounds. . . ." In prison there were riots between Stalinists and Trotskyists, and the latter "being fewer, got the worst of these clashes." Each side accused the other of being betrayers and spies.⁸

Trotsky and His Bulgarian Followers

On various occasions during its short history the Bulgarian Trotskyist movement

was in direct contact with Leon Trotsky. On October 4, 1930, Trotsky wrote an extensive letter to his Bulgarian followers expounding his view of the Soviet Union as a "workers state."⁹ Less than two months later he sent them a critique of a manifesto which they had issued, apparently the first official document of the new Left Marxist Opposition. He expressed "several doubts as well as a few objections" to this document.¹⁰ He particularly objected to the way they had interpreted the Russian Marxists' condemnation of terrorism by the Social Revolutionaries, and the apparent condemnation by the Bulgarian Trotskyists of the continued illegal status of the Bulgarian Communist Party. He also objected to the apparently even-handed condemnation by his followers of the attempts of the Socialists and Communists to dominate the labor movement, and their apparent confusion on the need for the Trotskyists to be "an independent faction which sets itself the task of taking a part in the life of the party and of the working class."¹¹

About a year later, on October 17, 1931, Trotsky gave his Bulgarian followers some political advice on how to proceed. "It is essential," he wrote, "for the Left Opposition in Bulgaria to approach the official party as closely as possible, and to penetrate it as deeply as possible." He added that "the growth of the official party presents the Opposition with great tasks. But only on the basis of great tasks will the Bolshevik Leninists be able, step by step, to prove the correctness of their principled position to the best elements of the party."¹²

Late in 1932 the Bulgarian Trotskyists were having great difficulties. In the elections of 1932 the Communist-controlled Workers Party had made an impressive showing. Among other achievements it had won a plurality in the city council of Sofia, the national capital, which entitled it to select the mayor of the city. All of this had made the Trotskyist criticisms of the official party's positions and behavior to appear carping.

Trotsky, as a consequence of this situation, wrote his followers a letter of encouragement.

The temporary difficulties of *Osvobozhdenie* are no grounds for pessimism. In the special conditions of political development in Bulgaria over the last eight-nine years, the appearance of the Left Opposition coincided with a wave of sympathy and votes for the official party. That wave has a generally radical, partly oppositional, partly revolutionary character, unconscious, unthought-out, undifferentiated. In such conditions the working masses feel temporary satisfaction in the mere fact of their awakening and in the mere possibility of expressing their feelings by voting for workers' deputies. Taking power in the Sofia city council gives new satisfaction to the workers. *Osvobozhdenie's* criticism "dampens" these moods and appears unnecessary, unintelligible, even hostile. This stage is completely unavoidable.

Much of what has already been said by *Osvobozhdenie* has sunk into people's minds, and under the influence of the demands of the class struggle they will take on new life and acquire more strength and that will lead to a renewal of *Osvobozhdenie*.¹³

The Bulgarian Trotskyists were represented at the "preconference" of the International Left Opposition held in Paris in February 1933, along with ten other national Trotskyist groups. There is no indication of the name (or names) of the Bulgarian representative(s).¹⁴

Disappearance of Bulgarian Trotskyism

The liquidation of the Bulgarian Trotskyist movement largely resulted from the establishment of an authoritarian regime in 1934 and the subsequent inability of the movement to revive was determined by the advent of a Stalinist regime a decade later.

Nissan Oren has said of the post-1934 regime that "the true nature of Bulgarian politics in the second half of the thirties is not easily definable. Bulgaria did not become a totalitarian state, nor did it turn fascist in the true meaning of the term. Although banned, political parties continued to lead a shadowy existence. In this sense, party politics remained significant, although strictly limited in scope and depth." Oren added that "it was only natural that those political groups best suited to perform under illegal conditions would find their relative weight in the political arena enhanced."¹⁵

As a consequence of the May 1934 coup, the Communists first decided to liquidate the Workers Party, within which the Trotskyists had worked politically. But as a result of instructions from Georgi Dimitrov, then living in Moscow, this decision was reversed. Nevertheless, the Workers Party, like the Communist Party itself, had to function underground,¹⁶ which did not facilitate the Trotskyists' work.

In any case, as Joseph Rothschild has noted, "it was a foregone conclusion that the Trotskyists would lose out against the Communist leadership. They were few and poor. Trotsky's encouragement was no substitute for the Comintern's organizational and financial resources. The policies advocated by the Trotskyists were not sufficiently daring, original, or realistic to galvanize the workers to rally to them."¹⁷

Furthermore, as so frequently happened among Trotskyist groups, the Bulgarian Left Marxist Opposition was soon wracked by factionalism. Its two most outstanding figures, Manov and Todorov, formed separate groups, each of which published its own version of *Osvobozhdenie*.¹⁸

By 1938 the Bulgarian Trotskyist movement had largely disappeared. It was not listed at the time of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International as one of the groups associated with the new organization.¹⁹

All of the individuals who had been associated with Bulgarian Trotskyism did not

disappear entirely from politics. In June 1942 Stefan Manov, one of the most important Trotskyist leaders, served as a lawyer for a group of Communist leaders who were put on trial by the pro-Nazi government of King Boris. His efforts and those of other attorneys were not sufficient to save the prisoners from conviction and the execution of eighteen of them.

After the war Manov "took a leading part in the People's Courts set up to try Bulgaria's wartime leaders." However, as Nissan Oren has observed, "his good deeds for the Communist cause did not save him. He was arrested in the late forties as an ex-Trotskyite, tried in March 1950, and given a life sentence. He died or was killed in prison."²⁰

After World War II the Bulgarian Trotskyists were apparently able for a short while to reestablish their organization, known then as the Internationalist Communist Party (Fourth International). One of the members of the party's Central Committee was Dimitar Gatchev, who also helped to establish in March 1946 a Bulgarian section of the League for the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.

As one Trotskyist source has noted, "The correspondence that the PCI carried on at the time with the Fourth International shows that the 'Patriotic front' regime led by the Stalinists did not permit the PCI to carry on any legal activities." By the end of 1946 virtually all of the leaders of the group had been jailed. At least some of them, including Dimitar Gatchev, were not released until the early 1960s.²¹

Canadian Trotskyism

The Canadian Trotskyist movement was one of the first national segments of International Trotskyism to be established, being led in the beginning by several people who had been among the founders of the Canadian Communist Party. During its more than half century of existence, it has been particularly plagued with the problem of "entrism," and in general with its relations with first the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and then the New Democratic Party (NDP). It was one of the national sections most affected by the factional fight within the United Secretariat during the 1970s.

The Origins of Canadian Trotskyism

The first Canadian Trotskyist was Maurice Spector. Born in Russia in 1898, Spector had migrated to Canada when a small child. In 1914 he joined a Socialist Youth organization which existed in Toronto at that time. By 1918 he was on the executive committee of the Ontario Social Democratic Party.¹ In 1920 he helped establish the Plebs League of Ontario with other sympathizers with the Bolshevik Revolution. With the encouragement of the Communist International, Spector joined with Jack MacDonald, head of the Toronto Workers Educational College, and some Ukrainian and Finnish language organizations to establish the Canadian Communist Party in 1921.² The founding meeting took place on an isolated farm near Guelph, Ontario.³

Spector was elected to the executive committee of the new party and to its three-man press committee. He was the first editor of the Communist Party's underground newspaper, *The Communist*. Then in 1922, when the Communists established a "legal" orga-

nization, the Workers Party, Maurice Spector became its chairman and in that capacity attended the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern in that same year. He visited Moscow again in 1924 when he began to become aware of the struggle under way within the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party.⁴

When the CPSU conflict began to be reflected in the Comintern, Spector led those in the leadership of the Canadian party who at first refused to have the party go on record in blanket condemnation of Trotsky.⁵ However, at the Seventh Plenum of the Comintern, Tim Buck, the Canadian delegate, officially put the Canadian party on record against the Left Opposition. As a consequence, Spector offered his resignation as chairman of the party and editor of its paper, *The Worker*. He was urged by the party's national secretary, Jack MacDonald, to withdraw his resignation, which he did.⁶

Early in 1928 Spector came to the United States in search of allies in the struggle then going on within the International. Among those with whom he talked at length was James Cannon, who until then had not been much concerned with the problem; Cannon expressed an interest in the situation but made no definite commitment.⁷

Spector and Jack MacDonald were the two Canadian delegates to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1928. There, Spector was elected to the Executive Committee. As a member, along with James P. Cannon, of the Program Commission of the Congress, he received a copy of Trotsky's "Criticism of the Draft Program of the Communist International." Both were convinced by this document, and decided to defend Trotsky's position within their own parties.⁸

Upon his return home, Spector was very quickly expelled from the Canadian Communist Party in November 1928 as a consequence of his profession of support for Trotsky.⁹ Early in 1929, with a handful of followers, he established the Canadian Left

Opposition as a branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition) of the United States. It was not until 1934 that the Canadian Trotskyists were recognized as a separate section of International Trotskyism.¹⁰

Another leading figure of the Canadian Communist Party had joined the Trotskyist ranks. This was Jack MacDonald, who had been secretary of the party since its inception. A Scot who had emigrated to Canada in 1912, MacDonald was a metalworker and a leader of the Independent Labor Party of Ontario until he joined the Communist ranks in 1921.¹¹ MacDonald at first sympathized with the Right Opposition and as national secretary protected those who were expressing support for it. In March 1930 he was removed as national secretary, and was "suspended" from the party as a Rightist.¹² He was definitively expelled soon thereafter. In late 1932 he joined the Trotskyist ranks.¹³

Ross Dowson has written about the activities of the Canadian Trotskyites in the early 1930s. "For 4 or 5 years this handful of revolutionaries, despite violent persecution from the Stalinists and the bosses, carried on a pioneer work. They conducted study classes, forums and circulated the *American Militant*. . . . By 1934 the group had grown considerably and began to extend its influence into the trade union field and the unemployed movement. It began to publish irregularly a press of its own. Mass meetings were held that attracted hundreds of workers and contact was made with elements in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Montreal and elsewhere."¹⁴

One of the first people to establish a Trotskyist nucleus outside the Toronto area was Earle Birney, who was from Vancouver and was introduced to Maurice Spector in Toronto, where he was studying, in 1932. Upon his return shortly afterward to British Columbia, Birney established the first Trotskyist group in western Canada.¹⁵

In August 1934 the Canadian Trotskyists

decided to establish the Workers Party of Canada. At the same time a youth group, the Spartacus Youth League, was also set up.¹⁶ With these actions the Canadian movement for the first time had its own organizational structure separate from that of the U.S. Trotskyists.

Relations with the movement in the United States remained close, however. Jack MacDonald attended the founding meeting of the U.S. Workers Party, formed when the Communist League of America merged with the "Musteites" in December 1934. He reported at that time that the Canadian English-language Trotskyist periodical *Vanguard* had a circulation of 1,200 copies an issue, and the Trotskyist Ukrainian-language paper five hundred copies. The Ukrainians, he said, had published "a number of pamphlets, among them several by Trotsky." MacDonald claimed that "The W.P. has already established firm connections in most of the organized trades, including the building, clothing, shoe and metal workers unions. A few of the members are in leading positions in these unions."¹⁷

By the middle of 1935 the Canadian Trotskyists had converted their English-language periodical from a monthly to a bi-weekly. Their U.S. colleagues noted that *Vanguard* had begun to carry a regular column, "United States Labor News Letter," written by Blake Lear of the U.S. group.¹⁸

The only contact that the Canadian Trotskyists seem to have had personally with Leon Trotsky during this period took place in 1936. In February of that year Maurice Spector and George Lyman Paine (White) visited Trotsky in Norway. Spector had moved to New York, where he was strongly opposed to the prospective entry of the U.S. Workers Party into the Socialist Party, and he went to Norway primarily to urge Trotsky against that move. In the process of the discussion, Spector commented that "this question has consequences for the Canadian situation, which I'm not authorized to discuss officially." However, he was au-

thorized by the tendency in the U.S. party which was opposed to entrism to find out from Trotsky exactly why he favored the move.¹⁹

Their conversation ranged beyond the entrism issue, and Trotsky apparently gave Spector and his colleague some observations and suggestions with regard to the Canadian movement. He particularly stressed the need to approach the country's farmers, politically, only after having established a solid base among the urban workers, and he urged the importance of work among women and youth.²⁰

The First Entrist Experiment

As Maurice Spector rightly judged, the entry of the U.S. Trotskyists into the Socialist Party did have serious implications for their comrades north of the border. However, there were apparently factors within the Canadian Trotskyist movement which were impelling it to follow the advice that Trotsky had given to his French and U.S. followers.

Many years later, Ross Dowson noted that "the growth of the organization was based not on experienced revolutionists who had come through years of struggle in the Stalinized CP but on new recruits to Marxism. The difference in ideological maturity between the leading two or three comrades and the membership was vast and great responsibilities were thrown on the leadership. . . . Without material resources it retained a paid functionary only at occasional periods. Its press, *The Vanguard*, appeared irregularly. No national tour was made by any leading comrade to consolidate the contacts gained across Canada. A national convention was never held."²¹

By the latter half of the 1930s there existed in Canada a party in which the Trotskyists might carry out the entrism tactic. This was the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation [CCF], which was established in 1932 in a convention at Calgary as the result of a

merger of a number of provincial labor and socialist parties and farmers' groups. Among the labor parties were the British Columbian Socialist Party of Canada, the Alberta Dominion Labor Party, Independent Labor parties in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba and the Labor Conference of Ontario. The United Farmers of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario also joined the CCF.²² Kornberg and Clarke have noted that "as a vehicle of political protest the party quickly claimed the support of many of the groups [principally farmers and workers] who had been attracted to the Progressive Party in the 1920s." They added that "although not able to effect dramatic electoral breakthroughs in national politics, the party established itself as a preeminent feature on the political landscape."²³

In pursuit of the general policy of the international Trotskyist movement, the Workers Party was liquidated into the CCF. The British Columbia group entered the CCF in 1936, and in the following year the local branches in Ontario and other provinces went into the CCF. The Trotskyist Youth also entered their CCF counterpart in 1936.²⁴

The initiation of entrism immediately caused havoc in the ranks of Canadian Trotskyists. The move had only been approved by an extremely narrow majority and some of the minority refused for more than a year to enter the CCF. Probably more disastrous, MacDonald, who had supported entry, and some of the other original leaders, soon dropped out of the movement.²⁵

The Trotskyites within the CCF organized the Socialist Policy Group (SPG), which put out a mimeographed publication, *Socialist Action*. Many years later, that periodical was reported to have "addressed the major questions confronting the Canadian working class—including the question of the coming imperialist war—from a principled Trotskyist programmatic standpoint. . . . The October 1938 issue of *Socialist Action* contained an 'Action Program for the CCF' which called for 'Not a Cent, Not a Man, for

Imperialist War,' 'Towards a United States of Socialist America,' 'Expropriate the 50 Big Shots,' and 'Towards a Workers National Guard,' along with many other class-struggle demands."²⁶

The Founding Congress of the Fourth International passed a special "Resolution on the Work of the Canadian Section," which had previously been adopted by the All-American and Pacific Preconference. The document stated that it "endorses the action taken by the Canadian comrades in forming an open Socialist Policy Group in the CCF on the basis of a declaration on the war question." It went on to argue that "while our general line is oriented toward an early establishment of an independent Canadian section of the Fourth International, this does not preclude the possibility of continued work in the CCF, in provinces where the objective conditions are more favorable than in Ontario."

The Fourth International instructed its Canadian members "to create a thorough line of demarcation between the reformists, centrists, and themselves on every important national and international problem." It also warned that they might "prematurely" be expelled from the CCF and ought to prepare for further operation as an independent organization. It urged "preparatory steps for the new activity of this group should be taken even now," and that particular attention ought to be paid to working among members of the Stalinist party.²⁷

Soon after publication of "An Action Program for the CCF" the Trotskyists in Ontario were expelled from the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. However, the British Columbia Trotskyites were not expelled and continued to work within the CCF. The Trotskyists who had been thrown out of the CCF established a new group, the Socialist Workers League, in January 1939.²⁸

Of course, World War II began only seven months after formation of the Socialist Workers League. The league suffered considerably from the war. As Ross Dowson wrote

many years later, "the war hysteria had serious repercussions on our movement. . . . During the war a handful of comrades in Toronto managed to maintain connections and publish 3 or 4 issues of an illegal mimeographed paper. In 1942 an organizational trip was made across Canada and connections were renewed with a few scattered contacts and the old centres of Montreal and Vancouver."²⁹

It was later argued that "The Socialist Workers League . . . virtually ceased to exist and what remained turned once again to the CCF, this time for shelter against repression."³⁰ In at least some cases Trotskyists organized factory clubs of the CCF.³¹

In November 1944 a national conference of Canadian Trotskyists was held in Montreal, attended by delegates from Prince Rupert, Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and the International Secretariat. A resolution was adopted "to realize in shortest possible time the formation of the Canadian section of the Fourth International." The meeting decided that "the building of the revolutionary party at this period requires the open and independent existence of the Canadian section of the Fourth International." However, it also recognized that it did not "shut its eyes to the varying opportunities that present themselves in different sections of the CCF."³²

On June 1, 1945, the first issue of a new Trotskyist periodical, *Labor Challenge*, appeared. It was identified as the official organ of the Socialist Workers League.³³

The Revolutionary Workers Party

The principal figure to emerge in the leadership of Canadian Trotskyism during and just after World War II was Ross Dowson. Dowson was a strong advocate of the Trotskyists operating independently, outside the CCF. He wrote in July 1946 that "conditions were never so favorable as they are today for the unfurling of the banner of Trotskyism. Our past year's activities curbed and hemmed in

as they were, give us a foretaste of what lies ahead for us as an independent political party. Released from the restrictions imposed by a ccf orientation, our movement will sink its influence deep into the unions and rally around its banner the most militant and advanced elements of the Canadian working class."³⁴

There was some opposition to independent action within the Trotskyist ranks, particularly in British Columbia. However, in 1946 the Revolutionary Workers Party (RWP) was established; it existed for about half a decade.

This new Trotskyist party was established right at the height of the wave of postwar strike activity. With relatively modest results the Trotskyists tried to take advantage of that labor militancy to establish a base in the organized labor movement. They also took part on a limited scale in electoral activity. In 1948 they ran Dowson as candidate for mayor of Toronto, and he was endorsed by two locals of the United Automobile Workers and received twenty percent of the total vote. The slogan of the campaign was "Vote Dowson, Vote for a Labor Mayor, Vote for the TROTSKYIST Candidate."³⁵

In spite of their considerable activity the Revolutionary Workers Party remained a very small organization. Its principal centers continued to be Toronto and its environs and Vancouver in British Columbia. At best, it had only scattered members elsewhere. It continued to publish *Labor Challenge* as its official organ.³⁶

The Second Entrist Experiment

By the beginning of the 1950s the Canadian Trotskyists were again thinking in terms of trying to work principally within the ranks of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. This was not because of either expansion of the ccf or the growth of a leftist trend in that party. Quite the contrary. As Kornberg and Clarke have noted, "after

achieving its greatest federal electoral success in 1945 (capturing twenty-eight seats), the ccf's dream of establishing a socialist commonwealth through the mechanism of parliamentary democracy slowly faded. Postwar prosperity, the cold war, and continuing frustration at the ballot box led the party to moderate its ideological pronouncements and electoral platforms. . . ."³⁷

Undoubtedly the factors curbing the expansion of the reformist ccf were having an even more drastic impact on the possibilities of growth of the revolutionary RWP. As early as 1950 the RWP was discussing the possibility of concentrating its efforts on working within the ccf, where at least there were a number of politically active workers.

The RWP received encouragement from the International Secretariat (IS) of the Fourth International for a new entrism experiment. On March 1, 1950, the IS sent a letter to the Revolutionary Workers Party suggesting that this time entrism should be "something of a long duration, starting from the present level of political consciousness in the ccf, which is most likely very low. . . ."³⁸

The Revolutionary Workers Party convention of 1951 adopted a document entitled "The ccf—Our Tasks and Perspectives," which presaged the new entrism tactic. It argued that "the ccf under the next upsurge will embrace the class. The class will go there and nowhere else; there it will undergo the experience of reformism—and there, given the perspective of world and Canadian capitalism, will move forward to the revolutionary solution of its problems." In 1952 the RWP was officially dissolved, with its members being instructed to enter the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation.³⁹

About the same time that the Canadian Trotskyites were reentering the ccf, the split was developing in the Fourth International between its secretary, Michel Pablo (Raptis), and his supporters who backed an "entrism sui generis" on a world scale, on

the one hand, and opponents of that policy, on the other. Although the strategy being followed by the Canadians might have been supposed to have generated sympathy among them for the Pablo position, they were apparently under pressure from the Socialist Workers Party in the United States to line up against Pablo and in support of the new International Committee faction. Some swp leaders, including George Novack, conferred with Ross Dowson at the time.⁴⁰

The Canadians did line up with the International Committee, which provoked a split in their ranks, the principal pro-Pablo leaders being Fitzgerald and McAlpine. Their faction soon disappeared.⁴¹

In spite of alignment of the Canadian Trotskyists with the anti-Pablo faction of the ri, some of their U.S. counterparts seem to have continued doubts about the Canadians' position. U.S. Trotskyist leader Murry Weiss wrote Farrell Dobbs, national secretary of the swp on February 18, 1954, that "I am convinced that Pabloism, that is real Pabloism, has taken a deep hold in the whole organization up there. They don't fully realize it. They think they are all united in the work in the ccf. And they are, but on a Pabloite line I'm afraid. They have become infected with the terrible disease of thinking that everything can be solved with fancy endless maneuvers in the ccf, with 'deep' entry conceptions."⁴²

Meanwhile, the reception of the Trotskyists by the ccf leadership was anything but friendly. As a consequence, in the spring of 1955 the Trotskyists in the Toronto area were thrown out of the ccf once again. Those in the Vancouver region, however, were able to stay within the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation until 1959.⁴³

The Toronto Trotskyists, upon being expelled from the ccf, reorganized as the Socialist Educational League (SEL) and began to publish a new periodical, *Workers Vanguard*. In December the new SEL ran Ross Dowson as candidate for mayor of Toronto,

and another member, Stanton, for one of the two vacancies in the city's board of control. The two Trotskyist candidates were strongly attacked by Ford Brand, acting mayor, a ccf candidate for reelection to the board of control. For this purpose he particularly used an address before the Ontario Federation of Labor. The ccf publicly dissociated itself from the Dowson-Stanton candidacies. The Trotskyist mayoral nominee received 2,374 votes and Stanton 3,863. This compared with the 23,645 votes Dowson had received in 1949 when he ran for mayor on the rwp ticket.

Some 40,000 copies of the first issue of *Workers Vanguard* were distributed during the campaign. Afterward it was reported in *The Militant* of New York that "the Socialist Educational League, armed with the *Workers Vanguard*, is preparing to capitalize on the excellent work done in the election campaign."⁴⁴

The Trotskyists and the New Democratic Party

However, events within both the trade union movement and the ccf were preparing the way for still another entrist effort by the Canadian Trotskyists. In the wake of the merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations in December 1955, their two Canadian affiliates, the Trades and Labor Congress and the Canadian Congress of Labor, joined forces in 1956 to form the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC). The old CIO group had endorsed the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation as "labor's political arm" for many years. In the reunited labor movement it pushed for the same kind of endorsement, although on a somewhat different basis. At the 1958 convention of the new CLC a National Committee for the New Party was set up jointly with the ccf. Out of it was to emerge in 1961 the New Democratic Party (NDP).

The Trotskyists expressed their strong

support for the launching of the new party. Ross Dowson wrote in August 1960 that "we support the new labor party unconditionally." To "participate" in the process of establishing it the Trotskyists set up a new organization of their own. At that point there existed the Socialist Educational League in the Toronto region and the Socialist Information Center in the Vancouver area. They were merged to form the League for Socialist Action [LSA].⁴⁵

As had been the case in the CCF, the Trotskyists found it difficult to function within the New Democratic Party. In 1963 most of those identified with the League for Socialist Action were thrown out of the NDP. Two years later, in 1965, the Trotskyists succeeded in establishing a new group within the NDP, the Socialist Caucus. In 1967 twelve of the leaders of the Socialist Caucus were expelled from the NDP by its Ontario provincial committee.⁴⁶

The Trotskyists had their greatest—if fleeting—success within the New Democratic Party during their association with the much broader left wing, known as the Waffle, between 1969 and 1973. Komberg and Clarke have commented concerning the Waffle that "the NDP's ideological stance has been subjected to vigorous criticism from within by a number of academics and intellectuals (dubbed the 'Waffle Movement'). The Waffle gained strength quickly during the late 1960s and early 1970s, articulating a platform which called for a return to basic socialist principles and greatly expanded emphasis on Canadian nationalism. It was the latter that seemed to have particular resonance. Essentially, the Waffle contended that nationalism, expressed through such traditional socialist programs as the nationalization of industry as well as by a vastly expanded Canadian content in the mass media and other vehicles of popular culture, was the precondition for building an independent socialist Canada."⁴⁷

The Waffle movement was particularly strong in the Ontario region but had sup-

porters also in a number of other provinces. For a short while it gained control of the party organization in the province of New Brunswick. At the height of its influence the Waffle was able to get 37 percent of the vote in a leadership fight in which its candidate, Jim Laxer, ran against David Lewis for the head of the NDP.⁴⁸

The most spectacular coup of the Trotskyists within the Waffle took place in New Brunswick in 1971. There their members, particularly those of the Trotskyist youth group Young Socialists, succeeded in getting control of the Waffle faction for a short while (in fact, winning and losing control twice within a few weeks), and the Waffle won control of the provincial NDP, committing it to support the nationalization of industry without compensation.

However, the national leadership of LSA reacted negatively to all of this. They accused the YS and LSA people of New Brunswick of trying to split the New Democratic Party there and suspended them from membership in the LSA. Subsequently, the anti-Waffle elements won back control of the NDP in the province.⁴⁹

Undoubtedly the national leadership of the LSA had mixed motives in taking its action. On the one hand, they must have feared the impact of the New Brunswick events on their relationship both with the Waffle elsewhere and with the NDP in general. On the other, the New Brunswick YS leaders tended to be very critical of the national leadership, and to side internationally with the International Majority Tendency in the United Secretariat, to which the national LSA leadership was opposed.

In Ontario a split developed within the Waffle group in 1972. A more radical minority sought to have the group challenge more strongly the leadership of the NDP in the province, particularly that of Stephen Lewis, son of the national NDP leader David Lewis. In that situation the LSA people tended to side with the more moderate group and to counsel caution, even though some of the

more left-wing Waffle elements apparently had expressed considerable interest in and friendliness toward Trotskyist ideas.⁵⁰

The more radical group of Waffle withdrew from the NDP in 1972 to form the Movement for an Independent Socialist Canada.⁵¹ Kornberg and Clarke have noted that the rest of the Waffle forces in Ontario were expelled in 1973, and that "although disbanded as an organizational element within the party, ex-Waffle workers and sympathizers have continued to argue that neither the NDP nor Canada will achieve its potential until the present course of ideological moderation is abandoned."⁵²

One serious casualty for the Trotskyists from this association with the Waffle was the loss of Ross Dowson from the movement. He left in 1973 to establish his own Socialist League, basically because he did not think that the Trotskyists recognized sufficiently the need for stressing Canadian nationalism.⁵³

Other Activities of the LSA

The Canadian Trotskyists in the League for Socialist Action engaged in more activities than just work within the NDP: they held periodic national meetings and carried out campaigns on a number of issues and among different elements of the populace.

Of considerable importance were their regular national conventions, preceded by considerable preliminary discussion among the LSA's local groups of the issues to be debated. The 1970 convention, held in Toronto, was reported to have been "the largest assembly ever held by Canadian Trotskyists." Delegates were present from thirteen branches, eight more than had been present at the 1968 national meeting, since when the membership had reportedly increased by thirty-five percent. It was reported that "there were three other major areas of discussion: the growth of separatist sentiment, the women's liberation movement, and the development of a left wing known as the

'Waffle' caucus in the New Democratic Party. . . ."⁵⁴

The eleventh convention of the LSA, meeting in Toronto in December 1975, was attended by 187 delegates and observers. Among the latter were groups from the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, as well as from two other Trotskyist organizations in Canada. The major discussion of this convention centered on the growing crisis of the Canadian economy and the issue of Quebec nationalism. There were also reports delivered and adopted on the Portuguese revolution and on the growth of the United Secretariat.⁵⁵

Another kind of national meeting organized by the LSA was a Socialist Educational Conference. One was held in August 1971 at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, and was attended by nearly 450 people. Kate Alderdice wrote in the LSA periodical *Labor Challenge* about this meeting that "the 427 registered participants spent a total of some seventy-one hours listening to lectures and classes, participating in panels and workshop discussions! Besides that, of course, there were many hours of informal discussions. For five days, the University of Waterloo became a *real* center of learning." Among those giving lectures were Ross Dowson, executive secretary of the LSA, George Novack and Evelyn Reed of the SWP of the United States, and Sean Kenny, "a leader of the Irish republican movement."⁵⁶

Another kind of "educational" activity of the LSA was the occasional scheduling of speaking tours for well-known foreign Trotskyists. Late in 1970 Ernest Mandel toured Canada, speaking in Vancouver, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Brandon, Toronto, Hamilton, Montreal, and Peterborough. He spoke both on college and university campuses and at meetings organized by the LSA and its youth group, Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes.⁵⁷ In January 1972 Tariq Ali, the Pakistani leader of the British USEC affiliate, also toured, speaking particularly on the Bangladesh problem.⁵⁸

As was true with their counterparts elsewhere the Canadian Trotskyists were very active in the radical student movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. When a student strike closed twenty-two of the twenty-five Quebec colleges and universities in October 1968, it was reported that "another important development has been the dramatic growth of the influence and prestige of the Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes. . . . Members of the LJS played an effective role in certain key colleges and schools. Its bulletin *Jeune Garde* was the only publication advancing the demand for a generalized occupation strike across the province to support the students' demands for a second French university, free education, and an adequate living wage for students." Right after this strike, the LJS ran its principal leader, Michel Mill, in a byelection in Montreal against the provincial minister of education.⁵⁹

Early in 1973 when there were sizable cutbacks threatened in university budgets in both Quebec and Ontario, the Young Socialists/LJS was very active in student protests. It was reported that the University of Sherbrooke students won a strike, LJS playing an important role in the leadership of the struggle. In the case of Trent University in Ontario, the student council was led by the Young Socialists and it led demonstrations against the cutbacks.⁶⁰

Although principally operating in NDP electoral politics, the League for Socialist Action sometimes ran its own nominees in general elections. One instance was the race for mayor and council in Toronto in December 1969. With the NDP not running a candidate for mayor or nominees for all of the council posts, the LSA put up John Riddell, its Toronto organizer for mayor, and Joan Newbigging, Richard Fidler (editor of their periodical *Workers Vanguard*), Harry Stone, a printer, and Marlie Ritchie, "an antiwar activist" for council. *Workers Vanguard* proclaimed that "this is by far the biggest election effort ever launched by the LSA or ys in Canada."⁶¹

The LSA strongly supported the Quebec

nationalist movement and as a consequence for the first time built a substantial branch in that province. In Quebec the LSA used the name Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (LSO) and soon after its establishment in 1964 the LSO began publishing a periodical *La Lutte Ouvrière*, which in late 1969 became a monthly newspaper.⁶²

Although supporting the movement for separation of Quebec from Canada, the LSA did not support the Parti Québécois, the principal party which emerged in support of that idea and which won control of the provincial government in 1976. The position of the LSO was put forward at the time of the 1970 provincial elections, when it ran one candidate, 23-year old Manon Léger, for the assembly.

Phil Coumeyer wrote at the time that "the LSO program—for a free and French and socialist Quebec—pointed to the necessity of independent political action through the formation of a mass labor party as the road to Quebec's national and social liberation. The LSO's call for a labor party put its campaign in sharp conflict with every other tendency on the left—most importantly the labor leadership, who were capitulating to the ground swell of support for the Parti Québécois, a 'bourgeois nationalist party.'" Coumeyer added that "the LSO demanded the right of self-determination for the Quebecois, using the campaign to infuse a socialist perspective into the national struggle."⁶³

Early in 1972 in "An Open Letter to Left Wing of Parti Québécois," Alain Boinor, one of the principal LSO leaders, wrote of the Parti Québécois that "the goal of its 'sovereignty' and procapitalist program, far from leading forward the struggle for national emancipation, is only to reinforce and extend the privileges of local exploiters without, for all that, challenging the dominant position of foreign, Anglo-Canadian, and American imperialism. The PQ's plan will be carried out with the support of imperialism, not behind its back; hence the need to appear 'traditional,' 'respectable,' and above

all capable of maintaining capitalist 'law and order.' Trying to turn the PQ into an instrument for liberation is like trying to turn a boss into a worker. . . ."⁶⁴

When the Parti Québécois won the 1976 provincial election Art Young wrote in the LSA periodical *Labor Challenge* that "The Parti Québécois is committed to defend big business rule, to oppose the rights of the Labor movement, and to oppose the key demands of the Quebecois for national rights. Whatever concessions the PQ government may be forced to grant, the masses of Quebecois will have to face the reality of the Parti Québécois—a party firmly opposed to their rights and their demands."⁶⁵

When the PQ government introduced a bill to limit instruction in English in the provincial schools only to children from families whose native language was English, the LSO submitted a much more radical proposal to the provincial parliament in which they argued that "as the only suitable solution to this dilemma, the LSO calls for establishing a single public school system, secular and French, for everyone. . . ."⁶⁶

Split and Reunification of the LSA/LSO

In the 1970s the Canadian Trotskyists underwent an important split, followed after about five years by a partial reunification of its forces. Although there were some indigenous reasons for it, this division was strongly influenced by the factional dispute then underway in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International between the European-dominated International Majority Tendency (IMT), and the largely SWP-led Leninist Trotskyist Faction (LTF). The majority of the Canadian movement was aligned with the SWP and LTF, those who broke away with the IMT.

The earliest evidence of dissidences within the LSA/LSO has been traced to disagreements of some of the Quebecois with the positions and policies of the organization. Elements led by Michel Mill were much earlier and more enthusiastic con-

verts to French-Canadian Quebec nationalism than the LSA/LSO as a whole. This controversy was said to have begun as early as 1965.⁶⁷

By August 1971 it became clear that there also existed the beginning of an oppositionist movement in the English-speaking part of the LSA, particularly in the Maritime Provinces and most especially in New Brunswick. These came to a head in a plenum of the Young Socialists, where the national leadership criticized the activities of the LSA/YS New Brunswick branch in handling relations with the Waffle Caucus and the NDP generally in the province; and the New Brunswick YS representatives presented some criticisms of LSA national policy, particularly with regard to student and feminist activities.

The upshot of this situation was the "suspension" of the LSA/YS units in the Maritimes. A few months later, early in 1972, these groups joined with Michel Mill and his Quebec following to form the United Minority Tendency.⁶⁸

At that point the International Majority Tendency of the United Secretariat began to become involved directly in the growing factional fight in Canada. During a tour of Canada in January 1972 by Tariq Ali, a strong supporter of the IMT in the British section, he "succeeded in hardening up the Maritime group and sowing the seeds of opposition to the LSA majority elsewhere." As a consequence, an open factional struggle began at the May 1972 plenum of the Young Socialists. The Unified Minority Tendency by then had representatives at the plenum from Montreal, Halifax, Toronto, and St. Catharines. This same plenum went on record, with the approval of the LSA, stressing strong support for expressions of Anglo-Canadian nationalism vis-à-vis the United States. This aroused the opposition of the YS Executive Council members from Winnipeg.⁶⁹

The Winnipeg contingent wrote Tariq Ali asking for advice, particularly about what relations they should have with the Unified

Minority Tendency. Ali replied, "I have been mainly in touch with the Halifax and Toronto minority comrades and a number of them attended our last convention so we discussed in detail with them . . . we are convinced that they represent a real hope for a breakthrough for the Fourth International in North America. We have no fundamental disagreements with them and would recommend very strongly that you comrades make arrangements to meet and discuss with them."

Perhaps as a consequence of this advice the Unified Minority Tendency and the Winnipeg Communist Tendency merged in August 1972 to form the Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT). By this time the Quebec contingent led by Mill had withdrawn from the LSA/LSO to establish the separate Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire. Subsequently, the RCT won control of the Peterborough local of the Young Socialists and the support of a number of the LSA's activities in the New Democratic Party in the Toronto area.⁷⁰

The influence of the USEC International Majority Tendency's position that "a new mass vanguard" had emerged in the industrialized capitalist countries since the late 1960s was probably reflected in a document submitted by the RCT to the April 1973 convention of the LSA. It argued that "The *tactic* for the construction of the revolutionary organization in English Canada at the present time is 'from the periphery to the center.' That is, the revolutionary organization will find the widest audience for its politics and its actions in milieux external to the organized workers' movement. It must seek to utilize this advantage to recruit to itself and mobilize these social forces for its own autonomous interventions, seeking to alter the relationship of forces between itself and the labor bureaucracy, becoming a pole of attraction for radicalizing workers, and, wherever possible, intervening directly in the struggles of the proletariat."⁷¹

The RCT had criticisms of several aspects

of the programs and policies of the League for Socialist Action. Notably, it claimed that in their general espousal of feminism the LSA leadership had adopted "anti-Bolshevik" positions through failure to stress the class nature of the discrimination and exploitation faced by women.⁷²

The RCT also came out strongly against LSA policy toward the New Democratic Party. It condemned failure of the LSA leadership to talk about the "social democratic" nature of the NDP, the LSA's declarations of "unconditional support" for the NDP, and its failure "to explain to the working class that this party is their *enemy*, and that a new one must be built."⁷³

The factional struggle reached crisis proportions in the middle months of 1973. Soon after the LSA convention the RCT faction was expelled. In October it joined with two other groups to establish the Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG). The RCT's partners in establishing the RMG were the Old Mole Group, which was New Left in origin, and the Red Circle Group, organized by a group of left-wing NDP activists.⁷⁴

The Revolutionary Marxist Group became associated with the International Majority Tendency of the United Secretariat. After the 1974 Congress of the USEC, it was accepted as a "sympathizing" group of the United Secretariat.

During this split in the Canadian forces of the United Secretariat the groups continued to publish English and French periodicals. *Labor Challenge*, put out in Toronto by the LSA,⁷⁵ had its counterpart in *Old Mole*, English organ of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, also issued in Toronto.⁷⁶ In Montreal the LSA/LSO published the French-language *Liberation*, and the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire issued *Combat Socialiste*.⁷⁷

This split lasted about four years. By early 1977 it was reported that "all three groups of Fourth Internationalists have been discussing the possibility of reunifying revolutionary Marxist forces in both Canada and Quebec. . . . On the basis of these discus-

sions, the Central Committee of the RMG, which met from December 29 to January 2, unanimously agreed that a principled basis existed for reunifying Trotskyist forces."⁷⁸

In preparation for this unification a nationwide joint tour across Canada was organized for Suzanne Chabot of the LSA/LSO and Jean Paul Pelletier of the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire. They talked particularly about "the struggle for self-determination in Quebec," but undoubtedly also discussed the impending unification of the USEC forces in Canada with the secondary leaders and rank and file members of the three groups involved.⁷⁹

The Revolutionary Workers League

In August 1977 the unification was achieved.⁸⁰ As a consequence the Revolutionary Workers League/Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire (RWL/LOR) was established. Two new periodicals appeared as organs of the RWL/LOR, the English-language *Socialist Voice* and *Lutte Ouvrière* in Montreal.⁸¹

A bit more than a year after its establishment the RWL resolved to follow the general policy then being pushed by the United Secretariat of "turning towards industry." This decision was taken at a Central Committee meeting in January 1979 and was confirmed by the League's convention in April.⁸²

Jim Upton, writing in *Socialist Voice*, explained this policy, saying that "in shifting its attention to industrial workers, the RWL will not be turning its back on the struggles of women, Quebecois, lesbians and gays, and other oppressed layers of society. These struggles, along with the need for solidarity with public sector workers, will be taken into the industrial unions in order to bring the decisive weight of industrial workers behind them. This will strengthen the RWL's ability to provide leadership in struggles outside of the industrial working class as well as within it."⁸³

In July the Revolutionary Workers League held "the first cross-country gathering of the

RWL's new industrial union fractions." Some sixty people participated, including members of the steel, auto, machinist, and woodworkers' unions. It was reported at this meeting that 28 percent of the RWL members had industrial jobs, while 8 percent of others were "actively looking for jobs in industry." The meeting focused on the role of the industrial unions in the New Democratic Party and the chances that successful penetration in those unions would give the Trotskyists a chance to augment their own influence in the NDP.⁸⁴

At least some of the RWL people continued to work principally within the New Democratic Party. This was reflected in the fact that the group's French-language publication, *Lutte Ouvrière*, published in June 1984 an article on the change in leadership of the British Columbia branch of NDP by Fred Nelson, who was identified as a "member of the NDP in Vancouver-East and of the Local 1-354 of the International Woodworkers of America."⁸⁵

The RWL engaged in electoral activity as its predecessors had done. For instance, in the October 1977 provincial election in Manitoba it generally gave critical support to the New Democratic Party (which was then in power in the province), but also ran one candidate of its own in a Winnipeg district.⁸⁶ In the second federal general election of 1979 it also generally supported the NDP in English Canada, and in Quebec tried to get the labor movement to name its own candidates. However, the RWL also ran four of its own nominees, one each in Vancouver and Toronto, and two in Quebec.⁸⁷

In his political report to the December 1983 convention of the RWL/LOR, which was unanimously approved by the meeting, Steve Penner commented on the positions the party would take in the election scheduled for 1984. He said that "our federal election campaign will put forward a socialist alternative, a strategy to unite workers in English Canada and Quebec in a common political struggle for government. Over the

next few months we will discuss in more detail our overall perspective for this campaign, including the question of running RWL candidates in English Canada and Quebec. . . . Our goal in this campaign is not to put forward the RWL as a governmental alternative today. Rather, it will contribute to the much-needed discussion in the working class on how its mass organizations can wage this struggle for power."⁸⁸

When the 1984 election actually took place the RWL ran five candidates of its own in Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. Elsewhere it urged its supporters to vote for nominees of the New Democratic Party. In Quebec it stressed the need for a new labor party based on the independent Quebec-based unions, but urged that pending the formation of such a party the workers should vote for the NDP.⁸⁹

The Revolutionary Workers League continued to support the cause of Quebec's separation from Canada. It greeted with great enthusiasm the call of the Central Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, the Quebec trade union group, for "an independent and socialist Quebec."⁹⁰ It also denounced the plans of the Parti Québécois government to call a referendum on the issue of separation.⁹¹

The general orientation of the RWL/LOR was put forth in Steve Penner's political report to the organization's December 1983 convention. He said that "we will center our propaganda on the most fundamental issues facing our class: our programmatic alternative to unemployment, concessions, and protectionism, including those immediate demands that can best promote labor's fightback. The need for workers in English Canada to defend Quebec's national rights and to forge a fighting alliance against the federal government. The importance of a fight for working-class policies inside the NDP in English Canada and for the construction of a labor party in Quebec. The urgency for labor to mobilize against imperialism's war in Central America. The fight for women's rights."⁹²

The RWL/LOR and the SWP of the United States

As we have noted in another chapter, the leadership of the Canadian section of the United Secretariat was accused by some of those who were purged from the Socialist Workers Party of the United States between 1982 and 1984 of having "marched lock-step with Barnes along the road to revisionism."⁹³ Although this may be rhetorical exaggeration, it is clear that the leadership of the RWP/LOR sided with the leadership of the SWP both in its quarrel with dissidents within the SWP ranks and in the SWP's growing dissidence with the United Secretariat.

Such coincidence of positions was certainly reflected in the fact that the SWP and the RWL/LOR undertook in 1983 to begin joint publication of a "theoretical" periodical, *New Internationalist*, which reflected the thinking of the Jack Barnes leadership of the Socialist Workers Party.⁹⁴ It was also reflected in the positions on specific issues of the Canadian group.

Like the SWP, the RWL/LOR put central emphasis on the importance of the role of the revolutionary movements of the Caribbean and Central America. Thus, the June 11, 1984, issue of *Lutte Ouvrière* devoted a page and a half of its eight pages to a speech by Fidel Castro. Another half-page was devoted to developments in Nicaragua. Similarly, the April 23, 1984, issue devoted a quarter of its space to Nicaragua.

For its part, the Socialist Workers Party gave very extensive attention to the relatively small Canadian USEC affiliate in its own publications. Thus, *Intercontinental Press* published virtually in full, over three issues, the political report to the RWL/LOR's December 1983 convention.⁹⁵

There were elements within the Canadian USEC affiliate who were not in sympathy with its new orientation, and were more or less in accord with the majority orientation of the United Secretariat. One of these was *Gauche Socialiste*, established in Quebec in 1983. It published a periodical of that name,

which proclaimed that "Gauche Socialiste struggles for the independence of Quebec, for socialism and for the liberation of women. The socialism which we defend is a democratic socialism and that will be real only when it shows that the oppression of women belongs to the past."⁹⁶

Gauche Socialiste held its first regular congress in October 1984. The principal documents for discussion were, "Contributions on the Fourth International," "The Political Situation, Our Program of Action and Our Task," "Women's Struggles and the Struggle for Socialism," and "Which Internationalism, Which International?"⁹⁷

Other dissident groups developed in English-speaking Canada as well. Representatives of these groups came together in November 1984 at a conference in Winnipeg to establish the Alliance for Socialist Action. It was reported that there were "participants from eleven cities, spanning six provinces and the Northwest Territories" at the meeting. Also in attendance were observers from the Gauche Socialiste of Quebec and fraternal delegations from Socialist Action and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency of the United States. A temporary National Steering Committee "composed equally of women and men from each of the cities and regions represented" was elected. Plans were adopted for publication of a regular bulletin and for the ultimate holding of a national convention to establish a permanent organization.⁹⁸

At the Twelfth World Congress of the United Secretariat early in 1985 both Gauche Socialiste and the Alliance for Socialist Action were apparently represented. It was reported that USEC at this meeting established "formal relations" with both of these groups.⁹⁹

The new Alliance for Socialist Action held its first regular convention in Toronto in November 1985. Delegates were present from groups in Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver and it was reported that others in Hamilton, Saskatoon, Calgary and Moose Jaw which had not been able to send

delegates would be part of the Alliance.¹⁰⁰

The Toronto convention adopted documents on "a Statement of Principles, Basis of Unity, Political Resolution, Norms and Organization . . . Tasks and Perspectives, and a Constitution." It also elected a National Committee and resolved to give particular preeminence to campaigns in favor of legalized abortion and against U.S. policy in Central America. It resolved to seek the earliest possible unity with Gauche Socialiste of Quebec, and it was reported that Gauche Socialiste also favored unity. The convention decided to publish a regular periodical, *Socialist Challenge—for Socialist and Feminist Action*.¹⁰¹

Other Trotskyist Groups

In addition to the United Secretariat's affiliates in Canada other elements of International Trotskyism have also had groups there. Most of these were offshoots of USEC's factional struggle of the 1970s.

The oldest Canadian Trotskyist group outside of the United Secretariat was the Workers League, which was established sometime before 1968. It was the affiliate of the Healyite International Committee of the Fourth International. Unlike most other Trotskyist groups in Canada it opposed Quebec nationalism. It was reported in 1969 that "the Workers League has been the only organization to oppose separatism and call upon the unity of the working class against all sections of capitalism."¹⁰² It was also reported that "the Workers League has always insisted that this Quebec nationalism could only end up by splitting the working class into English and French speaking; that the primary task was and remains even more so today, to unite the labor movement for the final task of overthrowing capitalism in Canada."¹⁰³ In 1977 it was said that the Workers League "confines its activities to Montreal."¹⁰⁴ At that time it was publishing a monthly periodical, *Labor Press*, in English and French, which was printed in the United States.¹⁰⁵

The Canadian Workers League was also opposed to the Canadian nationalism of the Anglophone part of the country. This was made clear at the time of the decision of the Canadian locals of the United Auto Workers late in 1984 to break away to form a separate Canadian Auto Workers Union. At that time the Canadian and United States Workers Leagues issued a joint statement: "We oppose any concession to the poison of chauvinism, whether American or Canadian. We are uncompromising revolutionary internationalists. In the struggle against the danger of fratricidal struggle between Canadian and U.S. auto workers, the decisive task ahead is the building of factions of the Workers League inside the UAW. We urge all auto workers, in Canada and the United States, to fight the planned split in the UAW, and to join the Workers League and build this new revolutionary leadership."¹⁰⁶

The affiliate of the Lambertist faction of International Trotskyism was the Groupe Socialiste des Travailleurs de Québec (GSTQ). It was established in 1973 soon after the split between Healyites and Lambertists in the International Committee.¹⁰⁷ It held its third congress in October 1977 in Montreal. Among those represented there were delegates of its youth group, the Rally of Youth for Socialism. At that point, the GSTQ and LOR were cooperating on several levels in the labor movement and student activities.¹⁰⁸ In the second national election in 1979 the two groups endorsed each others candidates.¹⁰⁹

A group representing the international Spartacist tendency also emerged out of the factional struggle in the USPC affiliate. That tendency made its first converts shortly after the split in the League for Socialist Action in 1973.¹¹⁰ In August 1974, a Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency was formed within the Revolutionary Marxist Group and a few months later it was expelled from the RMG.¹¹¹ Those expelled joined with an existing Spartacus League group to form the Trotskyist League.¹¹² Its monthly periodical was *Spartacist Canada*.¹¹³

The Canadian Spartacists suffered a small split in 1982 when a group broke away to form the External Tendency of the Trotskyist League. This group, whose exact position on specific issues remains somewhat obscure at least to one from outside the Spartacist ranks, had counterparts in the United States and Germany.¹¹⁴

The International Socialist tendency in International Trotskyism was established in Canada by a group of left Waffle members from the New Democratic Party. The Independent Socialists were organized in February 1975 and at the time of the establishment of the group it was said to be "a revolutionary response to the breakdown of 'left nationalist' politics in Canada." This statement added that "only a political strategy based on working class revolution and international socialism could hope to challenge American imperialism at its roots. . . . This situation offers the Independent Socialists the possibility to participate in building a rank and file opposition movement in the trade unions. . . . This . . . will lay the basis for the construction of a revolutionary workers' party in Canada."¹¹⁵

By the early 1980s the International Socialists (as they were called by then) were publishing a periodical, *Workers Action*.¹¹⁶ The Canadian group was represented at a world meeting of the International Socialist Tendency in Great Britain in September 1984.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

Canadian Trotskyism presents a classic example of one of the major problems which has faced the international movement, that of entrisism. Almost from their beginning the Canadian Trotskyists sought to win influence within the country's not exceptionally powerful Socialist Party, the CCF and subsequently the NDP. Although usually seeking to build up the nucleus of the prescribed "revolutionary vanguard" within these parties, the Canadian Trotskyists never had more than limited success in this endeavor.

At least from the 1960s on, Canadian Trotskyism also faithfully reflected the tendency of the international movement to split into several different quarreling groups. More often than not this factionalism reflected or was even provoked by the schisms taking place on an international scale. Undoubtedly, this penchant for quarreling among themselves contributed to the fact that by the middle 1980s Canadian Trotskyism was only a very minor factor even in left-wing politics.

Trotskyism in Ceylon/ Sri Lanka: The Rise of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party

Ceylon, which since 1972 has officially been called Sri Lanka, is one of the two countries in the world (Bolivia being the other) in which Trotskyism was for a certain period of time a significant factor in national politics. For more than forty years it had members in the national parliament, during most of this period it was the single most important political element in the labor movement, and on two occasions the Trotskyists had members in the national government.

Sri Lanka is not a country which Marxist theory would indicate as likely to be a major center of strength of a movement such as Trotskyism, advocating a proletarian revolution. An island of 25,332 square miles located to the south of the Indian subcontinent, it had a population in 1980 of approximately fifteen million people, only a relatively small minority of whom could be classified as proletarians. The economy of the country remained overwhelmingly agricultural, the majority of the gainfully employed people still being landholding or sharecropping peasants.

Until 1948 Ceylon was a British colony. However, for almost two decades before the date of independence the British had conducted an "experiment" in the island. In the so-called Donoughmore Constitution, enacted in 1931, Ceylon had been granted wide internal self-government with the British continuing to control only defense and foreign affairs, and reserving certain "extraordinary" powers for emergency use. The British moved the island towards independence at approximately the same time they took that step with regard to India.

The British had been only the last of many alien conquerors of Ceylon. The "indige-

nous" people of the island, the Sinhalese, believe themselves to be descended from people from north India who arrived twenty-five hundred years ago. Today, they make up about 70 percent of the population. The second largest element, constituting something over 20 percent of the people, are the Tamils, descended from invaders and immigrants from Dravidian southern India. They are about equally divided between "Ceylon Tamils," whose ancestors arrived many centuries ago, and "Indian Tamils," who were brought into Ceylon during the last century to work on plantations and who in 1948 were deprived of Ceylonese citizenship.

The rest of the inhabitants are descended in whole or in part from subsequent conquerors of the island. The Portuguese occupied the coastal areas in 1505, were driven out by the Dutch in 1656, and the British finally took control in 1796. Numerous Sinhalese today have Portuguese names and they and others are Roman Catholics, also reflecting the Portuguese colonial past. The "Burghers," Christian and with Dutch names, are a tiny but still quite influential part of the population. There are few Anglo-Ceylonese today, reflecting the fact that the British unlike their Portuguese and Dutch predecessors generally brought their European wives and families with them and took them back to Britain when they returned, and so did not establish Ceylonese families. They did leave the Ceylonese upper classes literate in English, the official language of colonial days and a major political issue after independence.

The successive conquests of Ceylon largely determined the religious composition of the population. Most of the Sinhalese are Buddhists and most Tamils are Hindus. These two religious groups are divided among themselves, however, and in addition to them there are Moslem and Christian minorities which cut across racial ("communal") lines.¹

It was against this background of colonial history—a "developing" economy and com-

munal, linguistic and religious diversity—that the Trotskyist movement of Ceylon grew and declined. These factors play major roles in determining the history of Trotskyism in the island.

However, the ideas and leadership of Ceylonese and International Trotskyism also contributed to the rise and decline of the movement. Because it *did* become a significant element in national politics it was almost inevitably faced with the problems of revolution versus reform. This found particular expression in controversies over the Trotskyists' participation in parliament, and even more bitter disputes over the decision first taken in 1964 to form part of a government coalition in which they were junior partners.

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party

Antecedents of the LSSP

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), which for a quarter of a century was the Ceylonese affiliate of the Fourth International and was by the mid-1980s still the largest of those groups in Sri Lanka claiming to be Trotskyist, is the oldest surviving party in the island. It was not the first party to be established in Ceylon nor the first party oriented toward the organized labor movement.

During the 1920s, A. E. Goonesinghe took the lead in establishing the Ceylon Labor Union, the country's pioneering union group. He had contacts with the British labor movement and participated in the Imperial Labor Conference in London in 1928 after which, with some aid from his British colleagues, he established the Ceylon Trade Union Congress, with twenty-two affiliated organizations. Goonesinghe was also the principal organizer of the Labor Party, probably the first political organization in Ceylon to call itself a "party."

Goonesinghe was a Sinhalese and a rather militant one. As a consequence the union movement which also began to develop in

the late 1920s among the largely Tamil plantation workers was alienated from his organizations and established its own separate groups.²

The trade union and political movement of Goonesinghe was not the breeding ground of the Marxist-Leninist movement in Ceylon. On the contrary, once the young people who were to establish the LSSP had begun their work one of the first things they undertook to accomplish was to organize a trade union movement to rival that led by Goonesinghe and the Labor Party.

Trotskyism and Marxism-Leninism in general had their origins in Ceylon in a group of young men who returned home after studying abroad, principally in Great Britain, in the late 1920s and early 1930s. George Lerski says of these people that "they learned their socialism mainly in the classrooms of the London School of Economics and Social Sciences, dominated in the interwar period by the fascinating personality of Harold J. Laski. But America also can claim to have influenced at least one of the founding fathers of Ceylonese Trotskyism, namely D. R. R. Gunawardena. . . . He was introduced to so-called scientific socialism during his studies in the late twenties at the University of Wisconsin, where, together with his Indian counterpart, Jayaprakash Narayan, he 'received his training in Marxism from Scott Nearing.'"³

The returning students found their country after 1929 suffering severely from the Great Depression. This intensified the growing disenchantment with British colonial control of the country which had found earlier expression in the Ceylon National Congress, established during World War I, and in the growth of the early trade union movement and the Labor Party.

Leslie Goonewardene has noted that "the group at the commencement numbered a bare half dozen. . . . But it gradually expanded. It might be of interest today to recall that N. M. Perera, Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene, Philip Gunawardena and

Robert Gunawardena were among the members of the original group."⁴

The young radicals (all from the Sinhalese upper classes) undertook to become involved in the labor movement. They succeeded in 1932 in organizing a union at the Wellawatte Mills, with Dr. Colvin R. de Silva as president and Vernon Gunasekera as secretary. In the following year it won a long strike.⁵ This success provoked the first conflict with the established labor movement of A. E. Goonesinghe, and Leslie Goonewardene has noted that "excepting the Wellawatte Mills, in this clash Mr. Goonesinghe was generally the victor. The young enthusiasts learned in the hard way that the working class does not lightly abandon its traditional leadership."⁶

But it was not their labor activities which first won the young Marxists widespread support, but rather a symbolic anticolonialist campaign which they undertook in 1933. This was a protest organized against the sale of "veterans' poppies" on Armistice Day, with the proceeds from the sales going to British veterans' organizations. The protestors organized the rival sale of Suriya flowers, with the money from these sales going to help Ceylonese World War I veterans rather than those of Britain. This Suriya Mal Movement "was launched on the initiative of the leftist-controlled South Colombo Youth League." George Lerski has noted that this group was "manipulated from behind the scenes by a nucleus of convinced Socialists [Dr. N. M. Perera, Dr. A. S. Wickremasinghe, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene, Vernon Gunasekera, and the two Gunawardena brothers, Philip and Robert. . . .]"⁷

Another campaign of the young Marxists which gained wide attention and was to have long-run political results for them was provoked by a widespread malaria epidemic which broke out in the Kegalla and Kurunegala districts in West-Central Ceylon in October 1934. Even official reports said that the very high number of fatalities from this

epidemic was due to the widespread malnutrition in the areas involved.

The young Marxists did not confine themselves to denouncing government policies in this situation. They decided to go out in the beleaguered region themselves and carry out relief activities. George Lerski has written that "Dr. A. S. Wickremasinghe, as the medical expert, took command in the countryside while the young barrister Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, the political scientist Dr. N. M. Perera, and the fiery revolutionist D. R. R. Gunawardena served as dispensary orderlies and distributors of necessities." Lerski added that "from these activities they gained long-lasting popularity as dedicated social workers . . . it was later to secure them parliamentary seats in the post-World War II elections, not so much on the basis of their party program as on their own personal appeal."⁸

Finally, the returned radical students began to engage in overt political and electoral activity. In 1931 in the first election under the new Donoughmore Constitution and the first conducted under universal adult suffrage, one of them, Dr. A. S. Wickremasinghe, was elected to the new State Council. Although there were a handful of other opposition members of the Council Wickremasinghe was the only Marxist in the body, and he gained a reputation as a bitter critic of the government and became "the target of concentrated attack by members who represented the vested interests of the Ceylonese Establishment."⁹

Establishment of the LSSP

The young Marxists decided to organize a political party in late 1936. George Lerski has suggested that the reason for their decision was the approach of elections for the Second State Council. He recounted that "On December 18, 1935, some twenty determined intellectuals, workers, and students formed the Ceylon Socialist (or Equality) party. Oriented toward the working masses,

these 'founding fathers' of the LSSP (most of them being between twenty-five and thirty years old) did not want an English name for the organization: Sinhalese being the language of the overwhelming majority, it was the Sinhalese designation that was of utmost importance. Thus the very name, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, was an innovation."¹⁰

Leslie Goonewardene has noted that "as a matter of fact, when the Lanka Sama Samaja Party was formed there were no accepted words in Sinhalese to describe the words 'Socialist' or 'Communist.' That is how the word 'Samasamajaya' coined by Mr. Dally Hayawardena . . . to describe the word 'Socialist' came to be chosen. The new term had the added advantage of not being associated with the ideas of reformism that are attached to the English word 'Socialist.'"¹¹

The founding convention of the LSSP adopted a "Manifesto," which Lerski has commented "resembles more the sober Fabian approach than the revolutionary philosophy of full-blooded Marxists."¹² Among its general statements of principle was its proclamation that the party was committed to "the achievement of complete national independence, the nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the abolition of inequalities arising from differences of race, caste, creed or sex."¹³

This document also listed some twenty-two "demands," which Lerski has described as "humanitarian cum economic." These included such labor issues as a minimum wage, unemployment insurance, an eight-hour day, the ending of compulsory registration of trade unions, "factory legislation to ensure decent working conditions," and a social security system including "sick benefits, old-age benefits, maternity benefits." It also included issues relevant to the peasantry, including free pasture lands, supply of seed paddy without interest, end of irrigation payments, and "abolition of Forest Laws relating to removal of brushwood and

transport of timber." Finally, there were such general demands as a more progressive income tax, reestablishment of inheritance taxes, and an end to indirect taxes.¹⁴

A few months after the establishment of the party Philip Gunawardena insisted in the State Council that "our party is not a Communist Party. . . . It is a party which is much less militant and less demanding than the section of the Communist or Third International." Lerski has said that "though most Samasamajists refused to be identified with the Stalinist Comintern, neither could they at that time be considered to be committed followers of Trotsky's apocalyptic doctrine of the permanent revolution."¹⁵

The founding convention of the LSSP elected the party's new leaders. Colvin R. de Silva was chosen as its president, and Vernon Gunasekera, "another able lawyer well versed in Marxism-Leninism" was named the national secretary of the party. Both of these young men were well-to-do Sinhalese.¹⁶

The LSSP in the State Council

One decision of the founding congress of the LSSP was that the new party should run four candidates in the forthcoming elections for the State Council, the national parliament. One was A. S. Wickremasinghe, the sitting member, elected as an independent in 1931. The others were Philip Gunawardena, described by George Lerski as "a popular tribune"; N. M. Perera, "the party's shrewd political scientist"; and "the quiet but effective Marxist organizer, Leslie Goonewardene."¹⁷ Two of these nominees, Perera and Gunawardena, were elected.¹⁸

The two Samasamajista members of the State Council served for four years until their removal in mid-1940 for their opposition to World War II. They were both among the most active and vocal members of the Island's parliament, although their techniques were somewhat different. Philip Gunawardena tended to be the more explosive

or even demagogic of the two, with N. M. Perera being "a more skillful dialectician."¹⁹

During their first four years as parliamentarians, Gunawardena and Perera participated in a wide variety of debates. They served on the Executive Committee of Labor, Industry and Commerce of the Council, and there carried on agitation for unemployment insurance, old age pensions, an eight-hour day, and the end of "assisted immigration" from India. They also worked for a more equitable tax system, fighting particularly for the progressive inheritance tax, and also sought unsuccessfully to get enactment of an income tax and a reduction of indirect imposts.

The LSSP deputies, although both had been educated largely in British schools in Ceylon and in overseas universities, were particularly concerned with the development of indigenous schools which taught in the local languages. They helped to bring about expansion of the primary and secondary school systems and fought for the organization of a full-fledged university.²⁰

Leslie Goonewardene claimed that "a number of reforms and measures of social amelioration are directly attributable to the agitation" of the LSSP in this period. Among these were measures establishing a school lunch program, modifying the traditional "headman" system, and abolition of irrigation taxes.²¹

Gunawardena and Perera were loyal to their Marxist beliefs in opposing communalism, whether on the part of the Sinhalese or the Tamils. They particularly denounced the efforts of the militant Sinhala Maha Sabha Movement, which sought a preferential position for the Sinhalese, and was headed by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, the minister of local affairs. George Lerski has commented that they "were definitely in the forefront of the opposition to chauvinistic bigotry, which was to divide the Ceylonese people so tragically two decades later. In particular they stood firmly against any discrimination toward the permanently do-

miciled plantation workers."²² Although opposing any further importation of Indian laborers for the plantations, they defended the rights of the Tamil workers who were already in the island. They particularly opposed attempts to disenfranchise the so-called "Indian Tamils," those who had arrived in Ceylon during the twentieth century.

The Samasamajists reiterated on every appropriate occasion their party's demand for the independence of Ceylon. At the same time they supported moves increasing Ceylonese control of the country's affairs. They were particularly active in arguing the use of the indigenous languages—Sinhalese and Tamil—in the courts, local government and even in the State Council itself.

Gunawardena and Perera took an active part in discussions of a possible new constitution for the island. They opposed the adoption of a British type parliamentary regime, favoring some modification of the State Council system under which committees of the Council were closely involved in the conduct of the various cabinet ministries.

The Samasamaja Labor Movement

Given its Marxist, if not Marxist-Leninist, orientation, the LSSP attempted in its early years to establish influence in the organized labor movement. Since they were allied to some degree in the State Council with A. E. Goonesinghe, they also sought for a while in 1936-37 to work with him and his followers in the trade unions. By the middle of 1937 this proved impossible.

The Samasamajists succeeded in organizing a number of unions under their own control. These included organizations among the railroaders, and in some of the country's limited number of manufacturing firms. They even made a beginning in establishing organizations among the plantation workers.²³

It was the LSSP efforts among the estate or plantation workers that gained the party

most attention, in connection with the so-called "Brassgirdle incident." Mark Anthony Lester Brassgirdle was a young Australian who went to work for a tea plantation but was dismissed for siding with the workers in a strike. He thereupon joined the LSSP and was coopted into its executive committee. Soon afterwards the governor ordered him deported. He went into hiding and the LSSP was able to protect him until he appeared at a mass meeting on May 5, 1937, which the Comintern publication *Inprecor* claimed was attended by 50,000 people.²⁴ Meanwhile, the State Council had overwhelmingly voted to condemn the government's deportation order. Arrested at LSSP headquarters after the May 5 meeting, Brassgirdle was brought to court, where the Ceylon Supreme Court vacated the order that he be deported.

The Brassgirdle case helped to underscore the LSSP as a defender of the underdog and of Ceylonese national rights. George Lerski has noted that "defeated in the State Council and quashed by the Supreme Court verdict, the Governor's hasty order of deportation turned into a smashing political victory of the LSSP."²⁵

Among the plantation workers the LSSP's principal competitor was the trade union organization of the Ceylon Indian Congress, a Tamil political group. However, the LSSP succeeded in organizing an All-Ceylon Estate Workers Union under its own leadership during the upsurge of plantation workers unionization in 1939-40.²⁶

In most of the unions established under LSSP auspices the leading posts were held by the middle and upper class Samasamajist leaders themselves, but there were some notable exceptions. One of the most important rank and file leaders to rise to prominence both in the unions and the party was G. P. Perera (no relative of N. M. Perera). Robert Kearney has said of him that

As a worker in a cigarette factory during the late 1930s, Perera participated in for-

mulating workers' demands and became involved in collective bargaining and the labor movement. At about the same time his concern with trade unionism was developed, he was attracted by nationalist agitation. Through his involvement in the labor movement, Perera came into contact with N. M. Perera and other early Samasamajists. As the newly formed LSSP was deeply concerned with the problems of organized labor and also was an uninhibited critic of colonial rule, G. P. Perera found himself drawn toward the party, which he soon joined. He continued his labor activity in the LSSP-led trade unions, organizing and leading one notable three-month strike in 1942. Later, he became a vice president of the CFL and an officer of several affiliated unions, as well as a member of the LSSP central committee.²⁷

Party Organization

Meanwhile, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party extended its organizational activities. It held its first regular national conference in December 1936 and its second one a year later. It began to issue several publications. Its official organ in Sinhalese was started in July 1936 with a circulation reported at 2,000 which was said to have grown to 20,000 by May 1937.²⁸

After the Brassgirdle incident the party undertook a major organizational campaign under the direction of Edmund Samarakkody. It concentrated first on Colombo and the areas around it, and by the time of its second national conference the party membership had risen from its original 80 to 800. There were twenty-one branch organizations of the party by that time. However, the LSSP leaders soon decided to limit membership growth, fearful that too rapid accretion of support might dilute the ideological purity of the organization.

The leadership of the party consisted of an eighteen-member executive committee which met regularly each month. A few

members who were inactive were dropped from the committee. Its members were very active in speaking at meetings which were organized in various parts of the country. Among the leading speakers were Colvin R. de Silva, the party president, Leslie Goonewardena, Philip Gunawardena, and N. M. Perera.²⁹

During the 1936-1939 period the LSSP was by no means a Trotskyist party. Its principal foreign contacts appear to have been with the Congress Socialist Party of India, with which it had "fraternal relations." An LSSP delegation attended by invitation the Indian National Congress session in Faizpur in 1936, and in April 1937 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, a Congress Socialist Party leader, visited Ceylon and spoke at meetings organized in various parts of the island by the LSSP.³⁰

Trotskyists vs. Stalinists

During its first four and a half years the Lanka Sama Samaja Party was avowedly Marxist but it had not clearly indicated to which branch of Marxism it adhered. As a matter of fact, it had within it a wide variety of people ranging, as one of its founders said, "from pale pink to various kinds of red."³¹ The most important of the elements represented were supporters of Leon Trotsky and Stalinists.

Speaking of the resolutions passed at the LSSP second congress, George Lerski has commented that "no part of this anti-imperialist and socially radical platform indicates that two years after the official launching of the social movement the party theoreticians considered themselves already to be the open followers of the exiled Leon Trotsky." Lerski added that "it may have been ominous however, that there is no mention of the Soviet Union and its socialist achievements in the four resolutions dealing with international affairs."³²

Nevertheless, it seems clear that there were well defined pro-Stalin and pro-

Trotsky elements in the leadership of the party. C. E. L. Wickremasinghe has told the writer that there was in those early years a Stalinist group which was well recognized as such.³³ On the other hand, George Lerski has said that "It is quite possible that a secret 'T' (Trotsky) cell was already in control of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and that the very lack of any expressed approval for Stalin could thus be attributed to the 'Totschweigen' tactics on the part of the conscientious Trotskyite leadership." He added that "Vernon Gunasekera related in private conversation that a secret inner group existed within the wider 'T' conspiracy circle, and that he along with five other convinced Trotskyites (Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene, the two Gunawardena brothers, Philip and Robert, and Dr. N. M. Perera) actually prepared the political decisions for the 'T' mainstream of the party, almost from its beginning."³⁴ C. E. L. Wickremasinghe attributed the Trotskyist inclination of the majority of the LSSP leadership to the influence of Philip Gunawardena, who from the time of his return from studying abroad had been a strong anti-Stalinist and saw Trotsky as the only viable alternative to Stalin. The majority of the other leaders, Wickremasinghe said, tended to go along with Gunawardena.³⁵

The conflict between the two elements in the party leadership came to a head during the first months of World War II. The anti-Stalinist elements in the LSSP were alienated by the Comintern's slavish endorsement of the gyrations of the USSR just before and after the outbreak of the war. As a result, in December 1939 the LSSP executive committee, by 29-5, adopted a resolution to the effect that "since the Third International has not acted in the interests of the international revolutionary working-class movement, while expressing its solidarity with the Soviet Union, the first workers' state, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party declared that it has no faith in the Third International."³⁶

The five opponents of this motion were S. A. Wickremasinghe, M. G. Mendis (joint

secretary of the party), K. Ramanathan, editor of its Tamil language paper, W. Arlyaratne, and A. Gunasekera. At the first 1940 meeting of the executive committee they were expelled from the party. Their demand that a new party conference be called to consider the issue was ignored by the majority of the leadership.³⁷

In November the pro-Stalinists established the United Socialist Party, with Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe as chairman and Pieter Keuneman as secretary general.³⁸ They were to remain for more than thirty years joint leaders of what in 1943 became the Communist Party. From 1940 on, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party was clearly and professedly a Trotskyist organization.

Legal Suppression of the LSSP

The anticolonialist attitude of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party was certain sooner or later to bring it into direct conflict with the government and the British authorities once the British Empire was engaged in war. This was particularly the case after the defeats of the Allies during April and May 1940.

From its inception the party had opposed Ceylonese financial contributions to the Ceylon Defense Force and their representatives in the State Council argued and voted against these. Basically they argued that these were forces designed to maintain colonial rule rather than to defend the island from outside attack. Once the Second World War had begun the LSSP strongly opposed Ceylonese contributions to financing new military installations, particularly those of the Royal Air Force. George Lerski has commented that "Dr. Perera continued his attack on the proposed Supplementary Estimate for the Defence of Ceylon in a way that could be hardly distinguished from ordinary sedition."³⁹

Philip Gunawardena clearly stated the ideological basis of the LSSP position in this period. In the State Council on September 5, 1939 he said that "this war too is for the division and redivision of the colonies and

semi-colonies. We refuse to be a Party to any Imperialist War. . . . The class struggle has refused to stop because a country is at war. Therefore, Sir, on behalf of my Party, I state that we refuse to consider that the people of this country are at war with any people anywhere else in the world, and therefore we refuse to participate in any Imperialist war."⁴⁰

The LSSP position did not waver in the face of the success of the German blitzkrieg in April and May 1940. On May 17, in arguing against appropriation of funds for an RAF base, N. M. Perera asked in the State Council, "Might I first ask the question, whether the Honorable the Chief Secretary is very serious, because the latest information is that they have practically capitulated? I do not know whether this is necessary. By the time they get ready, the war will be over and there is nothing to provide for. Secondly, might I know whether the Royal Air Force is now retreating to the East because they make it their practice or their habit to retreat according to plan?"⁴¹

The LSSP strongly opposed legislation designed to give the government special powers to limit civil liberties in case of an emergency. A speech in opposition to such a measure marked the last appearance of N. M. Perera in the Council, on May 30, 1940.⁴²

On June 18, 1940, the two LSSP members of the State Council, N. M. Perera and Philip Gunawardena were arrested along with the party's president, Colvin R. de Silva. On the following day Edmund Samarakkody was also arrested. Leslie S. Goonewardene succeeded in avoiding arrest.⁴³

The jailing of some of its principal leaders did not end all activity by the LSSP. In preparation for possible illegalization the party had established an underground apparatus headed by Reggie Senanayake and Doric de Souza.⁴⁴ One of its first acts was to organize a mass demonstration against the arrest of the party leaders, which was broken up by the police.⁴⁵ Although its press was suppressed the underground apparatus, led by

Leslie Goonewardene, was able to bring out some publications in spite of the ban. In April 1941 the LSSP was able to hold an underground conference attended by forty-two delegates and helped to organize a wave of strikes in the following month. At the April 1941 meeting the party adopted a clearly Trotskyist statement of principles.⁴⁶

While incarcerated the LSSP leaders used their enforced "leisure" to work out in some detail programs for basic changes in a number of areas, including education and agriculture, which they hoped to carry out once they were able to power.

On April 5, 1942 Colvin R. de Silva, Philip Gunawardena, N. M. Perera and Edmund Samarakkody escaped from prison in company of one of their guards during the only air raid that the Japanese ever made on Colombo. After being hidden by the underground party organization for some time, the first three escaped to India, where they passed the rest of the war. Samarakkody decided to remain behind to work in the LSSP underground.⁴⁷

The Bolshevik-Leninists

Most of the principal leaders of the LSSP spent the greater part of World War II in India. They did not give up political activity as a result. In April 1942 they joined with a group of Indian colleagues to organize the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India. The statement of principles of that group stated, "Recognizing the unity of the revolutionary struggle in India and Ceylon, and the need to build a *single* revolutionary party on a continental scale, the LSSP entered the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India as a constituent unit at the inauguration of the latter in 1942. By this act the LSSP ceased to exist as an independent party and its members adopted as their own program of action that of the new Party. . . ."⁴⁸

The last statement in this explanation was to cause some trouble after the Ceylonese leaders returned home. It was partially responsible for a division in the party's

ranks. In addition the membership of the Ceylonese Trotskyists in an Indian organization proved to be a handicap with the Sinhalese, who made up the majority of the population of Ceylon and were more or less hostile to the Tamil population, with its origins in India.⁴⁹

The connection between the Indian and Ceylonese Trotskyist groups continued for some time, however. Leslie Goonewardene has written that "this organizational connection was to continue for some years till after the transfer of power in India in 1947 and in Ceylon in 1948, such an organizational connection ceased to have any meaning. The Ceylon party then became a directly affiliated section of the Fourth International."⁵⁰

Among the early Ceylonese refugees who worked towards establishing the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India (which affiliated with the Fourth International) were Bernard Soysa, V. Kalasingham, Doric de Souza, and Leslie Goonewardene. Sometime later Colvin de Silva, N. M. Perera, and Philip Gunawardena arrived in India after escaping from prison. Other Ceylonese Trotskyists in India after 1942 included S. C. C. Anthonipillai, V. Karalasingham, Allan Mendis, Lionel Cooray, Reggie Senanayake, and Robert Gunawardena.⁵¹

A number of the Ceylonese Trotskyists were picked up by the Indian police from time to time. When this occurred they were sent back to Ceylon, where they were jailed.⁵²

During the latter part of the war a split developed among the Ceylonese Trotskyists. Leslie Goonewardene has written about this that "There were no differences in regard to program or policy. The differences centered mainly around organizational questions. One faction called itself the Bolshevik-Leninist faction and declared that the other faction was attempting to dilute the party and convert it into a loose organization. The other faction, calling itself the Workers Opposition, declared that the party machine had been captured by a group of

intellectuals who were obstructing the expansion of the party among the working class." N. M. Perera and Philip and Robert Gunawardena were among the leaders of the Bolshevik-Leninist faction; while Doric de Souza, Edmund Samarakkody, Bernard Soysa, and William Silva were principal figures in the Workers Opposition.

The Bolshevik Leninist Party of India (BLPI) sided with the Workers Opposition group and in a letter signed by Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene the BLPI announced on October 8, 1945 the expulsion of N. M. Perera and Philip Gunawardena.⁵³

At first both groups continued to call themselves the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. After failure of an effort to reunite the two groups, the faction recognized by the BLPI, "realizing the confusion arising from two parties using the same name, and recognizing that the other and larger party was considered in fact by the masses to be the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, decided to change its name to Bolshevik Samasamaja Party."⁵⁴

This division in the Trotskyist ranks in Ceylon continued until 1950. Both the Lanka Sama Samaja and the Bolshevik Samasamaja groups participated in the 1947 election for the fourth State Council, and supported each other's nominees. The LSSP elected the second largest number of deputies of any party, ten, and received 204,020 votes. On the other hand, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party elected five deputies and received 113,193 votes. This showing of the Trotskyist groups compared with the 751,432 votes and forty-two members of the State Council won by the victorious group, the United National Party.⁵⁵

In the debates in the State Council preceding the granting of independence to Ceylon by the British, the two Trotskyist groups took different positions. Although they both argued that the British maintained too much influence for themselves in independent Ceylon, the LSSP voted for the final motion accepting independence while the Bolshevik-Samasamajists voted in the negative.⁵⁶

"His Majesty's Loyal Opposition"

As a result of their showing in the 1947 election the Lanka Sama Samaja members of parliament became the first official Opposition in newly independent Ceylon. The leader of the LSSP delegation, N. M. Perera, was officially chosen leader of the Opposition, the first person to hold that title.⁵⁷ Robert Kearney has noted that "at independence, it was the largest single party in opposition to the governing UNP, and the Samasamajists harbored expectations of eventually replacing the UNP in power."⁵⁸

However, Trotskyist activities were by no means confined to the electoral and parliamentary spheres. They resumed their work in the organized labor movement, which now began to grow rapidly. As James Jupp has noted, in 1946 "the Samasamajists were able to establish control of the Ceylon Federation of Labor and the Government Workers' Trade Union Federation."⁵⁹

During the decade after World War II the ranks of Ceylonese organized labor swelled to an estimated 300,000 members "and were mainly in Marxist unions and the Ceylon Workers Congress." They engaged not only in limited economic strikes and collective bargaining but also in several nationwide movements. These included two general strikes in 1946 and 1947 and the so-called "hartal" of 1953.⁶⁰

A "hartal" is something more than a general strike; it involves the voluntary closing of schools and places of business in addition to workers' staying away from their jobs. That of August 12, 1953, was organized as a protest against the government's decision to end a weekly rice ration which had been established during World War II. It was called "the most significant direct mass action this country has seen. . . ." James Jupp recorded that "a joint statement of the Ceylon Federation of Labor (LSSP), the Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions (CP), the Ceylon Workers Congress and the Ceylon Mercantile Union (LSSP), called upon 'the trade unions and all unorganized workers to pre-

pare for a one-day general strike and to form united action committees in all places of work for carrying this into effect.' " The hartal succeeded in its objective of preventing elimination of the rice ration.

Ernest Mandel has stressed the role of the LSSP in this 1953 popular demonstration. He wrote, "The LSSP leadership appeared as a really revolutionary team at the head of insurgent masses, fighting in the streets simultaneously for immediate material gains for the impoverished masses and for the socialist overthrow of the capitalist regime."⁶¹

Unity and Division

In the early 1950s the Ceylonese Trotskyist movement at first achieved greater unity, then suffered new division. In June 1950 the LSSP and the Bolshevik Samasamajist Party were finally reunited after almost five years of separation.⁶² This move to unify the Trotskyist ranks was opposed by Philip Gunawardena, who refused to go along with it and pulled out to launch his own Viplavakari (Revolutionary) Lanka Samasamaja Party.⁶³

One explanation for Gunawardena's objections to reunification with the more intransigently Trotskyist elements of the Bolshevik Samasamaja Party was that he had already begun to have doubts about adherence to the idea of the "vanguard" role of the "proletariat" in an overwhelmingly rural country such as Ceylon.⁶⁴ Another possible reason judging from his subsequent behavior was that Gunawardena had already been touched by Sinhalese "patriotism" or "chauvinism," and objected to the belief in appealing equally to Sinhalese and Tamil workers which particularly marked the Bolshevik Samasamajists at that point. In any case this split in the Trotskyist ranks proved irreconcilable. It gave rise to what James Jupp has called "the unending feud between Philip Gunawardena and N. M. Perera."⁶⁵

An even more serious split occurred in the LSSP ranks in 1953. This centered on the question which was to plague the party for

the next quarter of a century—its relationship to other, non-Trotskyist parties. Robert Kearney has recorded that "disagreement with the leadership on the question of LSSP cooperation with other parties appeared at a conference in 1952. A resolution presented by the dissidents was defeated but the battle continued to rage within the party for an entire year. The dissident faction was allowed to argue its case in the party's *Internal Bulletin* and to send speakers to address local party units. A conference in 1953 rejected the dissidents' resolution in favor of one backed by the Politbureau on a vote of 259 to 125. Following their defeat the minority group left the party."⁶⁶

Leslie Goonewardene has claimed that the 1952-53 controversy was due to the fact that "the political ideas of Stalinism commenced once again to gain ground within the party." He cited passages in the opposition resolution at the 1953 conference criticizing the fact that in the 1952 election campaign the LSSP had not put forward the slogan of a "Democratic Government," which the resolution described as "at its lowest level a Bandaranaike Government" and "at its highest level a Government by a Sama Samaja majority." The same resolution had said that the LSSP should "enter into the closest possible agreement and cooperation with the CP and Philip Group in the trade union and political fields."⁶⁷

Unlike the split with Philip Gunawardena, that of 1953 did not result in the formation of a rival party. Robert Kearney has noted of the 1953 dissidents that "a number of them joined the CP or the VLSSP, some returned to the LSSP, and others eventually entered the non-Marxist Sri Lanka Freedom Party."⁶⁸

The Sri Lanka Freedom Party

The Rise of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party

With the election of 1952 the Lanka Sama Samaja Party lost its position as the princi-

pal opposition. This fact was to have a major impact on the future history of Trotskyism in Ceylon.

A year before that election a principal figure in the dominant United National Party, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, withdrew from government ranks to form his own party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). This new group pictured itself at one and the same time as being a non-Leninist Socialist Party and an advocate of the rights and special position of the Sinhalese Buddhist community, which made up almost two thirds of the total population of the island. It particularly sought the establishment of Sinhalese as the official language and conversion of Ceylon into a republic. It also pledged to reduce if not abolish the British and Indian control over the country's economy.

With the election of 1952 the SLFP overtook the LSSP as the second largest party. It received fifteen and a half percent of the vote compared to a little over thirteen percent for the LSSP. Although both parties elected nine members of the House of Representatives, and the LSSP had actually increased its percentage of the vote over that in 1947,⁶⁹ S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike became leader of the Opposition and from then on a major issue in the Trotskyists' political strategy inevitably became that of its relations with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

The SLFP presented the Trotskyists with two kinds of problems. On the one hand it competed strongly for the loyalty of the kind of people whom the LSSP was trying to attract. On the other it soon presented the Trotskyists with the question of whether they should compete or cooperate with the SLFP on the electoral front.

With the rise of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, which after the 1952 election quickly pulled ahead of the LSSP in terms of size and popular following, the LSSP was no longer the largest party in the country professing adherence to "socialism." The SLFP was soon accepted as a member of the Socialist International,⁷⁰ and proclaimed itself to be

"democratic Socialist." Although the Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist LSSP could deny as much as it wanted the Socialist bona fides of the SLFP, to many people of Ceylon to whom the LSSP might otherwise have appealed it appeared to be an ideological rival of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party.

But in addition to being "Socialist," the SLFP was also Sinhalese and Buddhist. It sought its support almost exclusively from the Sinhalese two thirds of the country, and at most was willing to strike compromises with the Tamil part of the population. Bandaranaike was one of the country's leading lay Buddhists and although the Trotskyists and Stalinists were willing to work with and even have as members Buddhist monks,⁷¹ they could hardly compete in this field with Bandaranaike and the SLFP.

The Sinhalese-orientation of the SLFP presented the Trotskyists with another fundamental quandary. Since their inception they had insisted on the mutuality of interests of the workers of Ceylon, regardless of whether they were Sinhalese or Tamil. This had particularly been the case with those elements which for five years had maintained the Bolshevik Samasamaja Party. However, in the face of the rising tide of Sinhalese communal feeling, particularly centering on the issue of making Sinhalese the exclusive national language of the country, the LSSP was faced with an issue on which they could not win. If they did not support "Sinhalese only" they would imperil their support among the Sinhalese workers and middle class in southwestern Ceylon among whom their major strength lay. On the other hand, if they supported "Sinhalese only" they would lose all the influence they had built up among the Tamil plantation workers, and would in addition be betraying what had been until then a fundamental principle, opposition to communalism.

Leslie Goonewardene has described the LSSP's position on the language issue during this period, and the price which the party paid for making its choices: "The Lanka

Sama Samaja Party was the only party with a base among the Sinhalese that stood firmly right to the end by its policy of both Sinhala and Tamil as official languages. Even the Communist Party latterly changed its position on this question. Both friend and foe have expressed their admiration of the party's devotion to principle. But there is no gainsaying that the party has paid a heavy price for its stand. It lost heavily among the Sinhalese masses. And although it has won the sympathy of wide sections of the minorities this has far from compensated for the losses."

The LSSP also continued to oppose the deprivation of the "Indian Tamils" of citizenship rights. Goonewardene has commented that "as a revolutionary socialist party, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party could not have acted otherwise. For, as distinct from opportunist politicians to whom power is an end in itself, to the LSSP power is only a means to an end. That end is socialism. And it knows that socialism cannot be built except on the basis of the unity and willing cooperation of the masses of all the communities that inhabit Ceylon."⁷²

Finally, with the rise of a left-wing party which surpassed it substantially in size and influence the LSSP was faced with the question of what attitude to assume in the electoral and parliamentary fields. They definitely didn't accept the SLFP as a "socialist" party, regarding it as "capitalist" or "petty bourgeois." However, they did agree with the SLFP on the need for defeating the United National Party, which all elements of the Ceylonese Left in the 1950s regarded as more or less a continuation of the colonialist regime. Hence, as the 1966 election approached the LSSP was faced—as were the other parties of the far Left—with the question of whether they should run candidates against those of the SLFP or cooperate with it.

Robert Kearney has summed up the impact of the rise of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party on the LSSP: "The emergence of the

SLFP as the principal alternative to the UNP in the early 1950s . . . robbed the LSSP of its hopes and led to a stagnation of the party's strength and influence."⁷³

But in spite of the rise of the SLFP, the LSSP continued to make some electoral progress. Leslie Goonewardene has noted that in the 1954 municipal elections "the party for the first time participated in a large way, and was able to assume the administration in seven Village Committees, three Urban Councils and the Colombo Municipal Council." In fact, in August 1954 N. M. Perera was elected mayor of Colombo.⁷⁴

Before and after these municipal elections the LSSP press gave considerable attention to the activities of the LSSP local governments. For instance, its English language paper *Samasamajist* featured the action of the LSSP administration in the town of Kalutara in enforcing honest weights and measures in the local meat market.⁷⁵ While the municipal campaign was still in progress the newspaper carried an article on "What the Samasamajists Did for Moratuwa," the first town to have had an LSSP administration. The accomplishments listed included extension of the paved roads in the community from three miles to ten miles, building a public bus stand, increasing the number of midwives from eight to twelve, opening a free clinic and an ambulance service, and digging four public wells.⁷⁶

The First SLFP Government, 1956-60

With the 1956 election the LSSP had to make its first decision concerning its electoral tactics toward the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. It chose to collaborate with, rather than oppose, the SLFP. As a result, "the SLFP, LSSP and CP joined in a 'no-contest' electoral agreement intended to avoid contesting the same constituencies and splitting the anti-UNP vote."⁷⁷

The SLFP and parties allied with it won fifty-one seats out of ninety-five in the April 1956 election, the United National Party

only eight. The LSSP also gained from its "no contest" agreement with the SLFP. Although its vote fell to 274,204 from the 305,133 it had received in 1952, it succeeded in electing fourteen members of parliament as against the nine it had placed four years earlier. The Federal Party, representing the Tamils, won ten seats.⁷⁸ N. M. Perera was chosen leader of the Opposition.⁷⁹

With the ascension to power of the SLFP government, the LSSP first announced that it would follow a policy of "responsive cooperation" with the new regime. This stance soon aroused opposition within the LSSP leadership. At the 1957 conference of the party a group consisting of W. Dharmasena, Robert Gunawardena, Edmund Samarakkody and Chandra Gunasekera introduced an amendment to the basic political resolution submitted by the Central Committee which argued that "this offer of cooperation to the capitalist government was wrong. The party could have and should have offered support to the progressive measures of the government while stating categorically that the SLFP government was a capitalist government."⁸⁰

Once in power Prime Minister Bandaranaike quickly moved to carry out his party program. A law was passed declaring Sinhalese "the one official language of Ceylon." This measure and other steps of the government provoked extensive rioting in July 1957 and May 1958 between Sinhalese and Tamils, and on the latter occasion provoked declaration of a state of emergency and the outlawing of the Federal Party and an extremist Sinhalese party. The emergency continued until March 1959.

The Bandaranaike government also undertook several economic and social reform measures. It nationalized the bus companies and Colombo harbor, and set up state corporations in the chemical and textile fields. It also enacted a Paddy Lands Act, sponsored by dissident Trotskyist Philip Gunawardena, a member of the cabinet, which protected the rights of rice-growing tenants.

The various measures of the Bandaranaike government aroused considerable unrest and opposition even among right-wing members of the prime minister's own party. The latter organized a plot against the prime minister, which resulted in his assassination on September 25, 1959.⁸¹

The murder of Bandaranaike brought on a major crisis. It soon became evident that most of those involved in the act had been leaders and members of the SLFP. Although the party unanimously chose Wijayananda Dahanayake (who had been expelled from the LSSP in 1952) as Bandaranaike's successor, it did not unite behind his government. James Jupp has noted that "Dahanayake's government only saved itself from total defeat by calling an election, having lost all semblance of parliamentary support." Dahanayake quit the SLFP.⁸²

The election resulted in a small plurality for the UNP and its leader Dudley Senanayake formed a new government. But, as Jupp notes, it "rested on such a weak basis . . . that the new prime minister had to resign when the Speech from the Throne was defeated." Governor General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, a one-time UNP leader, called a further election.

At that point "all the classic ingredients for a collapse of government and a revolutionary or military takeover seemed to exist. However, the armed forces did not move, the elections were not suspended, the parties did not collapse, and the Marxists did not revolt."⁸³ The SLFP, although getting less total votes than the UNP, elected seventy-five of the 151 members of the new parliament.⁸⁴ Under the leadership of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, widow of the murdered SLFP leader, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party was able to form a government.

The SLFP Government, 1960-64

In the face of the confusion and crisis of 1959-60, "N. M. Perera and his supporters in the LSSP were resolute in defending the

parliamentary system."⁸⁵ However, "in the chaos after the assassination of Bandaranaike, the LSSP returned temporarily to the belief that it could recapture the dominant position on the Left lost to the SLFP in 1956. In March 1960 it put forward one hundred candidates, claiming that it could form a government."⁸⁶

Nevertheless, in the second 1960 election the LSSP reached another "no-contest" agreement with the SLFP and the Communists.⁸⁷ This agreement was undoubtedly responsible for the ability of the SLFP to obtain close to a majority and for substantial increases in representation of both the Trotskyists and Stalinists in the second 1960 legislature over that in the first parliament elected that year.

Once Mrs. Bandaranaike took office the LSSP immediately faced the question of what their attitude should be toward her government. According to Ernest Mandel, "A proposal made by N. M. Perera to enter into a coalition with the SLFP was rejected by only a narrow majority." However, the LSSP did extend the Bandaranaike government parliamentary support by voting for the Speech from the Throne and for Mrs. Bandaranaike's first budget.⁸⁸ Leslie Goonewardena, the party's secretary, stated that "the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, while functioning as an independent group bound neither to the Government Party nor the Opposition Party, today adopts a position of general support of the Government, holding itself free to criticize the Government as well as vote against it where it disagrees."⁸⁹

The new Bandaranaike regime soon faced considerable difficulties. Its moves to nationalize all Catholic parochial schools and to enforce the Sinhalese official language policy provoked strong resistance, particularly from the Tamils in the northern part of the country. By the end of February 1961 a state of emergency had been declared in the north and east, and press and radio censorship was imposed while fourteen deputies were placed under arrest.⁹⁰

At the same time labor conflicts increased. There were a number of strikes, and finally a Joint Committee of Trade Unions was established under LSSP leadership which was said to include almost a million workers.

As a result of these events the LSSP turned strongly against the Bandaranaike government. At its July 1962 conference it passed a resolution which stated that "the struggles to come will not be waged only against this or that measure of the SLFP government, but against the whole policy of the SLFP government, especially in the field of wages and taxation." The resolution predicted that this opposition "will in its development rapidly reach the point where the need to replace the SLFP government itself by a government which corresponded to the demands of the masses. . . ." Finally, the resolution observed that "in preparing the masses for direct struggle, the Party cannot advance slogans which envisage a solution of the government problem mainly through the parliamentary process. . . ."⁹¹

Its growing opposition to the government pushed the LSSP closer to the other left-wing groups—the Communist Party and Philip Gunawardena's party, now called the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (People's United Front—MEP). On May Day 1963 the unions controlled by the three groups held their first united demonstration since independence. At that meeting they announced the formation of a United Left Front by the three parties. N. M. Perera said that "if the three Left parties march together in the manner they had done for the rally it would be possible to overthrow the Government and establish a socialist state."⁹²

James Jupp described the launching of the United Left Front (ULF): "Despite objections within the LSSP from Edmund Samarakkody, M.P., and the beginnings of the Sino-Soviet split in the Communist Party, the ULF agreement was signed on Hartal Day (at the astrologically auspicious hour of 7.42) by N. M. Perera, S. A. Wickremasinghe and Philip Gunawardena. The twenty-one left M.P.s

were to work together and a coordinating committee had already been set up to plan municipal election contests." There was opposition within the LSSP leadership to the party's joining the United Left Front. A motion to do so only passed the LSSP Central Committee by a vote of twenty-seven to eleven.⁹³

Edmund Samarakkody has noted that "the minority in the Central Committee . . . that had for some time been moving in a revolutionary orientation, were categorically opposed to the so-called United Left Front. The minority . . . was quick to see the reformist nature of this ULF which it correctly characterised as popular frontism."⁹⁴

The program of the ULF demanded "full political rights for local government and public corporation employees, full implementation of the Paddy Lands Act," among other things. Its longer range demands were for "a republic, a new constitution, regional councils . . . the legal protection of basic rights and nationalization of all banking and insurance."

LSSP Secretary Leslie Goonewardena claimed that "the Left parties would never again extend their cooperation to the SLFP government." Also, after the ULF won a by-election in January 1964 the LSSP victor, Vivienne Goonewardena, claimed that "only the ULF and the UNF were effective political forces."⁹⁵

Trouble With the Fourth International

Problems in connection with LSSP relations with the SLFP government intensified already existing difficulties in the relations of the Ceylonese Trotskyists with the Fourth International. Some of the details of these difficulties were disclosed after the break between the United Secretariat and the LSSP in 1964.

Ever since becoming a Trotskyist party the LSSP had always made clear its alignment with International Trotskyism. It carried on

continuous polemics with the Ceylonese Communists in its periodicals; from time to time it published statements of the Fourth International;⁹⁶ its press carried articles by Trotsky.⁹⁷

However, according to Ernest Mandel, a leading figure in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, "Before 1960, the international leadership was concerned about erroneous attitudes on various questions, but it limited its communications to the Political Bureau and Central Committee, occasionally to party conferences."⁹⁸ Some of these "erroneous attitudes" dealt with international problems such as "lack of integration of the LSSP leadership into the International, its failure to make financial contributions in proportion to organizational strength, its failure to maintain close relations with the Indian section. . . ."⁹⁹

Edmund Samarakkody has described the reactions of the LSSP to the 1953 split in the Fourth International: "On the first news of the split, the LSSP leadership leaned on the side of the minority and appeared to be willing to take up the struggle against Pabloist revisionism and liquidationism. But in the state of ideological confusion that reigned in the LSSP and its leadership, and in the context of the theoretical weakness of the International Committee (IC), the leaders of the LSSP wavered and jumped on the bandwagon of the majority led by the Mandels, Pierre Franks and the Livios."¹⁰⁰

However, for the first time since 1948 the LSSP was not represented at the 1961 Congress of the International (the Pablo group).¹⁰¹ Although there was a Ceylonese delegate present at the so-called Reunification Congress which established the United Secretariat in 1963, Pierre Frank has commented that "we learned that the section was in bad shape and that its delegate represented only a minority in the leadership."¹⁰²

Other shortcomings of the LSSP in the view of the International, according to Ernest Mandel, were "its lack of a Leninist-style organizational structure, its lack of systematic recruitment especially among

the plantation workers, the lack of party educational work, etc." He noted that on some of these issues "such criticisms led to favorable results." Also, Mandel said that "On many occasions the International had reason to be proud of the LSSP and its leadership. . . ." According to the United Secretariat leader, "the decision of the LSSP after the 1960 elections to support Mrs. Bandaranaike's government meant the abrupt end of this stage of relations between the leadership of the LSSP and the Fourth International." The next "stage" in these relations was marked by open criticism of the LSSP leadership by the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, the body to which the LSSP was then affiliated. In September 1960 the Secretariat issued a statement which said:

The IS has not failed to express to the LSSP its disagreement in regard to both its recent electoral policy and its policy towards the SLFP after the March and July elections. The IS particularly believes that the no-contest agreement, extended up to a mutual-support agreement, involves the danger of creating illusions about the nature of the SLFP among the great masses. . . . In the specific case of the Speech from the Throne, the IS thinks that the very moderate character of the government programme and its attitude against nationalization of the plantations—a fundamental question for a country like Ceylon—is such as to involve a negative vote by the LSSP MPs.

The Sixth World Congress of the International Secretariat adopted in 1961 a resolution very critical of the LSSP. It said that "the Congress condemns more especially the vote of parliamentary support expressed on the occasion of the Speech from the Throne, and the adoption of the budget by the party MPs." The resolution went on to say that "the World Congress appeals to the LSSP for a radical change in its political course in the direction indicated by the document of the leadership of the International."¹⁰³

These exchanges foreshadowed the much graver controversies which ensued when the LSSP finally decided to join the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike.

Joining the Government

Not long after the United Left Front won a byelection in January 1964 Mrs. Bandaranaike decided to try to recruit the Front's support for her government. Undoubtedly her reasons for seeking this were several. On the one hand there had been a number of desertions of SLFP parliamentarians, endangering her government's tenure in office. A second reason was undoubtedly the labor unrest which was being channeled by the parties which made up the United Left Front. Finally, as James Jupp has noted, "the ruling group in the SLFP was not outstanding and Mrs. Bandaranaike had difficulty in finding a Minister of Finance who could survive one budget. This became increasingly acute as the economic situation continued to get worse."¹⁰⁴

Mrs. Bandaranaike named an intermediary to seek an accord with the parties of the United Left Front, but the negotiations became stalled "largely because of the conditions imposed by the MEP,"¹⁰⁵ according to Robert Kearney, and as a consequence "of contorted maneuvers and plots, designed mainly to exclude Philip and the Communists from the government," according to James Jupp.¹⁰⁶

The deadlock in the negotiations between the government and the United Left Front was ended when "the LSSP abruptly agreed to enter the coalition without its United Left Front partners. Although excluded from the coalition, the CP nonetheless offered its support to the SLFP-LSSP Government."¹⁰⁷ As a result of the LSSP's change of stance, N. M. Perera, Anil Moonesinghe, and Chalmurdley Goonewardena became the LSSP members of the Bandaranaike government.¹⁰⁸

Trotskyism in Ceylon/ Sri Lanka: Split and Decline of Ceylon/Sri Lanka Trotskyism

The entry of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party into the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike opened a new phase in the history of Ceylonese Trotskyism. It generated very extensive opposition within the party and led to an almost immediate split. Subsequently, the movement splintered further. There also developed a separation of the largest avowedly Trotskyist party of the country from the international Trotskyist movement, although various schismatic groups were subsequently affiliated with various tendencies of International Trotskyism.

Internal and International Splits

On June 7, 1964, a national conference of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party met to pass judgment on the decision to join the Bandaranaike government. Pierre Frank attended this meeting in representation of the United Secretariat.¹

The conference was split into three groups of delegates, whom James Jupp has called "the pragmatic (led by N. M. Perera), the dogmatic (Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin de Silva) and the intractable (Bala Tampoe, V. Karalasingham, and Meryl Fernando)." The group led by Perera fully backed entry into coalition with the SLFP, and it received 507 votes at the LSSP conference. The Goonewardene-de Silva group backed maintenance of the United Left Front, and they had seventy-five delegates. The third group "who were opposed to parliamentary tactics in any case" according to Jupp, had 159 delegates. The LSSP deputies were divided, seven with Perera, five with Goonewardene and

de Silva, and two with the extreme group. A new Central Committee was elected to lead the party under the new circumstances.²

The Goonewardene-de Silva group remained in the party in spite of their original opposition to the new coalition policy. However, what Jupp calls the "intractable" group withdrew to form a new party, the LSSP (Revolutionary Section). Edmund Samarakkody was named secretary of the Provisional Committee of the new party.

On the day of the LSSP conference, June 7, Edmund Samarakkody issued a statement in the name of the new dissident party. It proclaimed:

The decision of the reformist majority of the LSSP to enter into a coalition with the capitalist SLFP . . . government and thereby to become an instrument of the capitalist class in Ceylon, constitutes a complete violation of the basic principles of Trotskyism on which the revolutionary program of the party is based. This degeneration is the logical outcome of the parliamentary reformist line which the majority of the leadership of the party has followed for several years and the substitution of parliamentary and reformist struggle in place of class struggle and revolutionary perspectives, and the systematic recruitment of nonrevolutionary elements into the party on that basis.

The revolutionaries of the LSSP have, in this situation, decided to organize themselves on the basis of the party program. They therefore withdraw from the conference and will hereafter function as a separate organization under the name of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary Section).³

The LSSP[RS] held an Emergency Conference on July 18-19. Before it met, the Provisional Committee of the new group had written the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USEC) asking that it be recognized by USEC as its Ceylonese affiliate. The

United Secretariat had already sent a message to the LSSP[RS] saying that it agreed "To recognize this Emergency Conference as officially constituting the continuing body of the Trotskyist movement in Ceylon and to empower it to speak for and conduct any matters pertaining to the section of the Fourth International in Ceylon." In its turn, the Emergency Conference of the LSSP[RS] resolved to accept "the recognition granted, and will hereafter function as the Ceylon Unit of the Fourth International." Fifty-four delegates voted for this resolution, nine against it, and eight abstained.⁴

Thus ended the association of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon with the international Trotskyist movement. Although it was to continue to call and consider itself Trotskyist, henceforward no international segment of the movement concurred in that assessment.

The United Front

The Coalition and the United Front

The entry of the LSSP into the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike together with the tacit support of that government by the Communist Party began a period of more than a decade in which the coalition of the SLFP, LSSP, and Communist Party constituted one of the two major political forces in national politics. Shortly after the overthrow of Mrs. Bandaranaike's first government in 1965 the alliance of the three parties was formalized under the name of the United Front.

The entry of the LSSP in the Bandaranaike government only temporarily prevented that government from being overthrown in parliament. The new alliance of the SLFP with the Left generated considerable opposition from right-wing elements within Mrs. Bandaranaike's party as well as from Buddhist religious leaders strongly opposed to Marxism in all its forms. These forces coalesced on December 3, 1964, when, on a vote of confidence, thirteen SLFP deputies led by

Minister of Lands C. P. de Silva (not to be confused with LSSP leader Colvin R. de Silva) voted with the opposition. The government thus lost by one vote.

Mrs. Bandaranaike immediately dissolved parliament and called new elections, which took place in March 1965. These elections "saw the leaders of the Buddhist clergy clearly aligned against the Coalition because of its Marxist elements: so wide was the UNP's range of support that it extended from the Sinhala communalists to the Ceylon Workers Congress. And the result was a 'National Government' with a majority of over forty and support from six parties, some of which were normally bitter enemies."⁵

For nearly five years following this defeat the United Front constituted the Opposition. The alliance among the three parties was strengthened and the idea of coalition with the SLFP came to be generally accepted by the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. Furthermore, the LSSP made at least one fundamental ideological change during this period. This was on the communalist issue.

In 1960 the LSSP had finally accepted the idea that Sinhalese should be the only official language of Ceylon. It still advocated, at least in theory, the use of Tamil in those parts of the country in which the Tamils made up the majority of the population. Nevertheless, when the United National Party government in January 1966 issued regulations providing for "the reasonable use of Tamil," the United Front parties organized massive demonstrations against these regulations. James Jupp has noted that "large sections of previous support both in the Lanka Estate Workers Union and amongst Ceylon Tamils were abandoned" by the LSSP as a result of participating in these demonstrations.⁶

The LSSP and Bandaranaike's Second Government

In May 1970 what by then had become a Ceylonese tradition, that each election resulted in the ouster of the government in

power, was confirmed. The United Front gained an overwhelming victory, winning a two-thirds majority in the parliament.⁷

The LSSP won the largest number of votes in its history, 433,244, and placed more members in parliament, nineteen, than ever in the past. The SLFP, through the vagaries of the electoral system and the operation of the coalition, won ninety of the 151 seats in the House, compared to only seventeen for the United National Party, which actually received over 60,000 votes more than the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.⁸

The LSSP was clearly the second party in the new United Front government and it held key positions, particularly in the economic sphere. N. M. Perera again became minister of Finance, which meant that "the main planning powers were under LSSP domination." Colvin R. de Silva was made minister of Plantations and also minister for Constitutional Affairs, and consequently "controlled the largest sector of the economy and the processes by which 'Sri Lanka' was to emerge from 'Ceylon.'" Leslie Goonewardene became minister of Transport.⁹

The LSSP also occupied key positions in the public administration just below the ministerial level. Doric de Souza became Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Plantations while Anil Moonesinghe, who had been an LSSP minister in 1964, was named Chairman of the Ceylon Transport Board. Furthermore, the Ministry of Planning, "although nominally controlled by Mrs. Bandaranaike, was actually much closer to the LSSP controlled Ministry of Finance."¹⁰

During the next five years Mrs. Bandaranaike's second government did bring about substantial changes in the country. The new parliament assumed powers of a constitutional assembly and wrote a new constitution which changed the name of the country from Ceylon to Sri Lanka, established a single house legislature, made the legislature sovereign (on the British model) by removing the constitutional review power of the courts. At the same time the new constitu-

tion enshrined the preferential position of Buddhism and the prevalence of Sinhalese as the only official language.

Other major steps were also taken. The country's foreign policy was oriented strongly in a Third World direction, with particular reliance on friendly relations with China and general opposition to the West. Foreign firms handling most of the country's principal exports, as well as a large part of the plantations providing those exports, were taken over by the government. The largest newspaper chain in the country, the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, was forced to sell most of its stock to the government, which promised to resell it to small investors.¹¹

LSSP and the 1971 Insurrection

The Bandaranaike government of the 1970s was not able to change many fundamental facts about Sri Lankan life and politics. A Sinhalese aristocracy remained dominant in much of the country's economy, its professions, and its politics. In spite of "Sinhalese only" as the official language the older generation of politicians continued to be made up in large part of people trained in exclusive English-language schools in Ceylon and in British or American universities. The economy of the country remained overwhelmingly rural, and dependent on three or four major exports produced on the plantations. The plantation laborers, predominantly Tamils, continued to be the most exploited part of the population. The economy grew very little, if at all, under United Front rule, and unemployment, which had been a growing problem since the early 1950s, was much intensified.

Even the progress made since independence created unforeseen problems. The national educational system, principally in the Sinhalese language, had greatly expanded during the 1960s, particularly in the rural areas. As a consequence by 1970 there existed a large number of youths with at least a high school education in Sinhalese for

whom the almost stagnant economy could not provide employment.

It was these educated and semi-educated young people for whom the economy had no place who arose in violent revolutionary revolt in April 1971. The LSSP like virtually all the rest of the Ceylonese "Old Left" was apparently caught completely unawares by this uprising. It strongly opposed the movement.

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) was apparently first established as a secret faction within the pro-Maoist Communist Party in 1965.¹² Most of the JVP members and leaders who had previous political involvement had apparently been members of either the pro-Peking or pro-Moscow Communist parties. James Jupp has noted that the pro-Soviet party was "severely affected by JVP . . . and the Communists faced the prospect of permanently losing their younger supporters if they were too closely identified with the government." He added that "The LSSP, in contrast, had no such problems, having lost most of its revolutionary members in 1964."¹³ However, in the JVP "most of the leaders and the great bulk of the rank and file . . . had few links, if any, with the established Marxist movement."¹⁴

The JVP was popularly referred to by the Ceylonese press as "Guevarists," and they apparently did consider themselves Marxist-Leninists. However, unlike the teachings of Ernesto Che Guevara, advocate of a long-drawn-out guerrilla conflict, the JVP rebels attempted a coordinated mass uprising marked particularly by attacks on police stations and other public buildings, all on the same day. Once this movement had clearly failed, it remained only a matter of time until the uprising was suppressed. However, in some parts of the country this "time" was a matter of "a few weeks of sharp fighting and several months of mop-up operations. . . ."¹⁵ In combatting the JVP uprising the government resorted to substantial restrictions on civil liberties for an extended period of time. About 15,000 young people were arrested and held with-

out charges, and a year passed before some of these were finally brought to trial.¹⁶

The LSSP strongly opposed the JVP uprising. Years later, N. M. Perera called it "an incredible maniacal design to overthrow a progressive government in the interest of capitalist reactionaries by pretenders to revolutionary socialism. . . ."¹⁷

The LSSP mobilized the trade union movement against the rebels. N. M. Perera suggested to Mrs. Bandaranaike that the trade unionists be armed to fight the rebels, arguing that the army was very weak and the police were totally demoralized, and the unionists were the only ones upon whom the government could depend. Mrs. Bandaranaike refused this suggestion, fearing that it would result in effect in passing power over to the LSSP, which still dominated much of the labor movement.¹⁸ But James Jupp has noted that "the Coalition unions formed the backbone of the volunteer vigilante squads formed to combat the JVP during the insurrection."¹⁹

In spite of its general opposition to the JVP insurrection, the LSSP suffered considerably because of it. Robert Kearney has noted that "The agony of the LSSP is suggested by the fact that one member of the party's parliamentary group was the only M.P. arrested in connection with the insurrection, and another was gravely wounded by rebel bullets while participating in a military expedition against the insurgents."²⁰

Apparently the JVP uprising also had some impact on the internal politics of the LSSP. Jupp has noted that "there was . . . a marked increase in support for the party's Left, represented by V. Karalasingham and V. Mayakkara, in elections to its Central Committee" following the JVP insurrection.²¹

Expulsion from the United Front Government

After more than five years in the United Front government the Lanka Sama Samaja Party was suddenly ousted from it by Prime

Minister Bandaranaike in August 1975. Undoubtedly both strains between the LSSP and its senior partner in the coalition, the SLFP, and pressures within the LSSP itself contributed to the party's fall from office.

The continued militancy of the trade unions under LSSP control had provoked a crisis in late 1974. A demonstration which was being planned by the LSSP-dominated Ceylon Federation of Labor was banned by the government, and the prime minister threatened to use troops to thwart it when the Federation leaders said that they would hold the demonstration anyway. They finally called off the meeting. Two months later, in January 1975, the Joint Committee of Trade Union Organizations, in which LSSP influence was also preponderant, threatened a general strike in support of a series of political demands. The strike was called off when the government agreed to some of the demands including nationalization of estates which had until then remained in private hands.²²

This further nationalization of plantations provoked another dispute within the government. The LSSP expected that the estates involved would be placed under Colvin R. de Silva's Ministry of Plantation Industry as most of those which had been taken over by the government in 1972 had been. The prime minister thought differently, however, and the newly expropriated estates were placed instead under the SLFP-controlled Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. This move thwarted the hopes of the LSSP to recruit plantation workers into their unions on a large scale in the estates involved.²³

Meanwhile, there were growing expressions of discontent within the LSSP at the lack of progress being made (from the LSSP point of view) by the United Front government. As early as the party conference of 1972 the LSSP ministers had to thwart passage of a resolution "proposed by a group of younger central committee members outside the inner circle of party leaders," which "voiced dissatisfaction with the progress

made through the UF and called on the party to push more aggressively for radical measures," by threatening to resign from the government. This resolution was withdrawn, but its supporters won almost half of the positions in the new central committee of the party.

Shortly afterward there appeared a Vama Samasamaja (Left Samasamaja) group within the party. It called for an open break with the SLFP and withdrawal from the government. Although the leaders of this group were soon expelled it apparently had considerable backing, particularly among younger members of the party.²⁴

These controversies did not necessarily foretell a break in the United Front or the exit of the LSSP from the government at least insofar as the LSSP was concerned. Initiative for that development came, rather, from the prime minister herself. Early in August 1975 she published a letter she had written to N. M. Perera which criticized a speech he had made to an LSSP meeting, accusing him of attacking the SLFP and endangering the coalition. Perera responded "in a conciliatory tone," saying that "despite our differences the common grounds on which we stand in the Front is ample to enable us to continue to function in unity."²⁵

Subsequently Mrs. Bandaranaike is said to have claimed that the reason for her thus picking a quarrel with the LSSP was the fact that they had approached her with the idea that she give up the prime ministership and become president of Sri Lanka. The presidency was at that time a relatively powerless position, and the LSSP is said to have proposed that N. M. Perera take over the prime ministership.²⁶

Whether or not this was Mrs. Bandaranaike's motivation, she soon informed the LSSP leaders that she intended to reorganize the cabinet, and in this reorganization offered them posts of considerable less importance than those they had hitherto held. They rejected this move, saying that any reorganization of the cabinet had to be the result of

negotiations among the parties which participated in it. Prime Minister Bandaranaike thereupon asked the president of Sri Lanka to dismiss the three LSSP ministers, which he promptly did.²⁷

The Decline of the LSSP

The expulsion of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party from the government proved to be very damaging to the LSSP. Outside of the United Front the party, along with all other Marxist groups, suffered from the fact that the country had been tending for some time toward a two-party system. The LSSP and Communist Party had been largely "quarantined" from this trend in the elections from 1956 to 1970 because of electoral arrangements and then alliance with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. As James Jupp has commented, "by removing the Marxists from the Coalition in 1975 and 1977 Mrs. Bandaranaike consigned them to electoral oblivion." But he added that "by splitting the vote which had been united in 1970 she made it impossible to salvage much for her own party either."²⁸

The July 21, 1977 general election was a massive victory for the United National Party, which received 51.5 percent of the vote and seated 139 members of parliament. The SLFP, in contrast, received only 30 percent of the vote and eight members of the National Assembly. The Tamil United Liberation Front, the major Tamil group, received an appreciable parliamentary representation—17 members. It did so, however, while getting only a little more than six percent of the vote.²⁹

In the 1977 election the LSSP formed a coalition with the pro-Moscow Communist Party and a new group, the People's Democratic Party, which was a splinter from the SLFP. This United Left Front issued an election manifesto which promised "to eliminate foreign capitalist monopolies," as well as "to abolish completely feudal relations . . . to limit and progressively reduce the role

of the private sector," and "to democratize the state system."³⁰

The election was an utter disaster for the LSSP. Its vote fell from 433,244 in 1970 to 230,281 seven years later. It failed for the first time in forty-one years to elect anyone to parliament. Perhaps the only consolation was that the party still continued to get almost twice as many votes as the Communists, who also failed for the first time in their history to elect any legislators.³¹

This electoral defeat was only the beginning of the decline of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. In the years that followed it lost a large part of its base in the trade union movement. The victorious United National Party, which under its new leader J. R. Jayawardena, one of the few pre-independence politicians to survive the 1977 election, had proclaimed itself to be "democratic Socialist," won control of a substantial part of the labor movement. In part this reflected the tendency of workers in government enterprises to join unions controlled by the party in power. However, it also represented a major long-term defeat for the LSSP, which for forty years had dominated organized labor.³²

Prime Minister Jayawardena in 1978 brought about the enactment of a new constitution, establishing a presidential system in place of the parliamentary one which had existed since before Ceylon achieved independence. N. M. Perera issued at that time an extensive criticism of the new constitution.³³

In elections for president held under the new constitution in October 1982 the LSSP ran Colvin R. de Silva against President J. R. Jayawardena. He was reported as receiving less than 1 percent of the vote "as former LSSP voters cast their ballots directly for the SLFP. . . ."³⁴

After establishment of the new UNP regime the first conference of the LSSP in March 1978 conducted a "reappraisal of what it called a 'critical phase' in the leftist movement. While admitting some tactical error, the party decided that parliament should remain the primary force. . . ."³⁵

In August 1979, the veteran president of the LSSP, N. M. Perera, died. As a consequence, Athanda Seneviratne was elected as his successor.³⁶

When the Jayawardena government called elections for "district development councils" in June 1981 the LSSP called for their followers to boycott the poll as did the SLFP and the Communists. The UNP thus won control of three quarters of these local bodies.³⁷

In May 1983 there were eighteen parliamentary byelections. Although there were negotiations for a common slate of opposition parties these failed. The LSSP as a result ran its own candidates, but was unable to elect anyone. Later in the year, following the most serious communal riots on record between Sinhalese and Tamils, the LSSP refused to participate in a "multiparty meeting on the Tamil issue."³⁸

In 1977, perhaps partly in consequence of the electoral defeat of that year, the LSSP suffered a split. A group broke away to form the Nava Sama Samaja party (NSSP), which aligned internationally with the Militant Tendency in Great Britain. Then, in 1982, the NSSP itself suffered a split when a group sympathetic with the United Secretariat broke away to form Socialist Worker.³⁹

It was not clear by the mid-1980s whether the LSSP would be able to recover even some of the ground which it had lost in the late 1970s. Nor could it be predicted whether the left alliance which strengthened the LSSP's political position from 1964 to 1975 could be reestablished. By early 1982 the SLFP, the core of this alliance, was itself sorely split between two rival factions.

Historical Overview of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party

The Nature of the LSSP Leadership and Backing

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party had remained for more than four decades the most influential professedly Trotskyist party any-

where in the world. It was one of only about half a dozen such parties which had gained members of its national parliament, and the only one to participate in the national government. Therefore, before going on to look at the fate of other Trotskyist groups in Ceylon/Sri Lanka it is important to look at a number of the characteristics of the LSSP.

The people who established the LSSP in the mid-1930s and continued to be its leaders for the next four decades were highly educated men of upper class Sinhalese origin. Almost all of them had been educated in private English-language schools in Ceylon and had received university training in Great Britain or the United States. Robert Kearney, writing about all of the country's Marxist parties, has said that "the educational level of the Marxist legislators is consistently well above the average of the chamber. Nine of fourteen, or 64 percent, of the Marxists elected to Parliament in 1965 were graduates of the universities or professional schools, compared with 35 percent (47 of 136) of all other M.P.s."⁴⁰

At least some of the LSSP leaders were outstanding members of the professional or business community. Colvin R. de Silva was widely recognized as one of the country's most brilliant—and best-paid—lawyers. N. M. Perera was a successful businessman and at one point was asked by the other party leaders to sell his interest in a vegetable oil mill in which a Communist-controlled union had organized a strike. After the break with the Fourth International the United Secretariat complained bitterly that the party's principal leaders had refused to become full-time politicians.⁴¹

The nature of the leadership of the party did not change fundamentally for four decades. Although a handful of rank-and-file trade unionists rose to top levels of the LSSP most of the Politburo and Central Committee members continued to come from the same general social origins as the party's founders.

The rank-and-file membership of the LSSP, Robert Kearney has pointed out "has been

very small and highly selective." The decision to keep it so was taken after the split of the Stalinists in 1940. As a result, "by the early 1960s, after a quarter of a century of existence, the LSSP included under 2,000 members." The result of this was that "the small, active, ideologically committed membership has made possible the vigorous rank-and-file involvement in party affairs and has given the LSSP an organizational coherence, discipline, and apparent sense of purpose and direction superior to those of most other Ceylonese parties."⁴²

Other observers have commented on the quality of the LSSP's organization. James Jupp noted that "my visits to party headquarters in 1969 suggested that the UNP had the largest, the LSSP the most efficient, the Communists the most modern and the SLFP the most ramshackle."⁴³

The LSSP paid a price for its deliberate limitation of its membership. Robert Kearney has noted that "the party's elitist character . . . restricted the establishment of the multiple, widespread links with the general public which seem necessary for the effective mobilization of mass electoral support." He illustrated this point by noting that "it was not unusual for parliamentary constituencies contested by Samasamajist candidates, even in the principal areas of LSSP strength, to contain no more than ten or twenty party members."⁴⁴

The LSSP maintained wider popular contacts through a so-called "Youth League" similar to those of most of the other parties. These were organizations of sympathizers. James Jupp has noted that the Youth Leagues "are normally larger than the party proper, and in the 'Leninist' LSSP are eight to ten times larger."⁴⁵ Robert Kearney has commented that "the LSSP Youth League, and to some extent the party's trade unions, partially filled the need for broad mass organizations able to mobilize participants for demonstrations and rallies, canvass electoral support, and help to project the influence of the party through the general public."⁴⁶

The restrictive membership policy of the LSSP was changed to some degree after 1964. The number of members had doubled to about 4,000 by 1970, and after the election triumph of that year "applications for membership soared."

The members recruited after the LSSP became a member of the United Front were somewhat different, apparently, from those who had traditionally belonged to the party. Robert Kearney noted that "the post-1964 recruits reportedly do not possess the same commitment to the longstanding LSSP perspectives, conventions, and leaders, and tend to be more concerned with immediate problems and objectives than the party veterans." They were more inclined to support the party's membership in the United Front than were the older party members.⁴⁷ However, by the mid-1970s, as we have noted, many of the younger members of the LSSP were growing unhappy with the allegedly slow progress which the United Front government was making in carrying out the party's objectives.

The electorate of the LSSP was confined largely to a relatively limited area in the southwestern part of the island. Robert Kearney has defined this region as "three adjacent areas, a narrow coastal belt extending south from Colombo and stabbing into the western edge of the Southern Province, an inland pocket in the Western Province to the southeast of Colombo, and a nearby group of constituencies in neighboring Sabaragamuwa Province east of Colombo." He added that "Few LSSP victories have been scored outside of a triangle running from Colombo eastward less than fifty miles to the Kanyan foothills in Sabaragamuwa Province and from Colombo south along the coast nearly to Galle in the Southern Province."⁴⁸

This area of LSSP strength divided into a region right along the coast and another further into the interior. According to Kearney, the party had particular appeal along the coast to minority Sinhalese caste groups

who in some degree saw the LSSP as an opponent of political domination by the dominant Goyigama caste. In the interior region the population is Goyigama, and Kearney argued that "Samasamajist strength there seems most readily attributable to intense organizational and agitational activities over nearly four decades."⁴⁹

LSSP Internal Democracy

One British observer has commented that "The LSSP leaders, brought up on Trotsky's denunciation of Stalinist bureaucracy, were intellectually committed to free discussion and the permission of more factionalism than was normal in Leninist parties after 1917."⁵⁰ Robert Kearney has confirmed this, saying that "the democratic internal functioning of the LSSP through vigorous discussion of alternative policies, open competition for party posts, and adherence to majority decisions is a source of great pride for Samasamajists." He added that "the LSSP leadership appears to adhere meticulously to the rules and norms of the party in elections and policy making, and to follow the decisions reached by the party conference or Central Committee."⁵¹

Elections for the Central Committee of the LSSP were often sharply contested. As many as seventy or eighty candidates would run for fifty positions. The Politburo was elected annually by the Central Committee by secret ballot. In addition "the Trotskyist outlook of the LSSP has produced strong emphasis on the evils of dictatorial control by a party bureaucracy, and the right of members to form factions and work within the party for the acceptance of their viewpoints is granted by the party constitution and supported by the ethos of the party."⁵²

The internal democracy of the LSSP was in strong contrast to the situation within the Communist Party, which followed traditional Stalinist procedures.⁵³

The LSSP and the Labor Movement

After World War II a major factor in the strength of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party was its influence in the organized labor movement. Robert Kearney has noted that "the LSSP requires of its members regular services for the party and active participation in party affairs, and the holding of a trade union office or other union duties is one type of activity accepted as fulfilling this party requirement." In addition, Kearney notes that "although a division of function between party and trade union duties is recognized in day-to-day activities, a major strike, even though without discernible political objectives, is likely to receive the assistance of party members. . . ."⁵⁴

In 1946 the LSSP gained control over the Ceylon Federation of Labor, which had originally been established by "a minor political group."⁵⁵ Subsequently, it also became dominant in the Government Workers Trade Union Federation which then "functioned in close and scarcely disguised association with the LSSP . . . despite the prohibitions against partisan attachments by public servants' organizations. . . ." The LSSP also dominated the Government Clerical Service Union. Until the split in the party in 1964 it also dominated the small but powerful Ceylon Mercantile Union headed by Bala Tampoe.⁵⁶

Robert Kearney notes that in the early 1970s with regard to the Ceylon Federation of Labor "a large majority of the CFL's officers and executive committee members have always been members of the LSSP. The party is said not directly to control and regulate CFL affairs, but the federation is in agreement with the party and consistently follows the party's lead, particularly on political questions."⁵⁷

In 1963 all of the unions controlled by the LSSP, Communist Party, and the MEP of Philip Gunawardena, together with some independent unions, joined to form the Joint Committee of Trade Union Organizations

(JCTUO). It drew up a list of demands on the government. However, "when the LSSP entered the government the following year, the JCTUO was asked to suspend agitation on a series of labor demands . . . the ensuing battle demolished the JCTUO, ending the Ceylonese labor movement's most serious attempt at unity."⁵⁸ Subsequently, JCTUO was reformed by the unions associated with the LSSP, SLFP, and the Communist Party. We have already noted its pressures on the United Front government in 1974.

Most of the LSSP's unions were in the vicinity of Colombo—the capital, major port and principal industrial center. For some years it also controlled a major plantation workers' organization, the Lanka Estate Workers Union, but it lost control of that group when it adopted a strongly anti-Tamil position early in 1966.

A substantial number of the LSSP unions consisted of government employees and workers in government enterprises. Because of the expansion of the spoils system after independence this kind of worker presented special problems to the unions regardless of which party controlled them. Many workers tended to belong to more than one union, sometimes to all of those existing in their particular place of employment. This made it possible for a worker to claim "support" of whatever party was in power or was likely to come to power.⁵⁹

The LSSP, Trotskyism, and Reform

During more than four decades after its foundation the LSSP was faced with the quandary of Trotskyist revolutionary ideology versus reformism. Although the world Trotskyist movement believed that the party had made a definitive decision in favor of reformism in 1964 the LSSP leaders did not believe or admit this.⁶⁰ Pressures in both directions continued as long as the LSSP continued to be a significant factor in national politics.

The LSSP was not Trotskyist at its incep-

tion although some of its founders did sympathize with Trotsky at that time. There is some question concerning when Leon Trotsky himself first became aware of the existence of a group of his followers in Ceylon. George Lerski believed that Trotsky addressed only one communication directly to the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, in December 1939, in reply to a letter from Selina Perera, the wife of the LSSP leader N. M. Perera and herself a person of some distinction in the party.⁶¹ Lerski thought that this communication from Trotsky "might have some effect on the LSSP majority's historical decision to expel the Stalinists over the crucial issue of adherence to the Comintern."⁶²

After the expulsion of the Stalinists the Lanka Sama Samaja Party was clearly a Trotskyist organization. The Bolshevik-Leninist Party which they joined in India in 1942 was officially the "Indian Section of the Fourth International."⁶³ Subsequently, the LSSP was to be the Ceylonese Section of the International.

However, the Ceylonese Trotskyists had a markedly different experience from that of any of their colleagues in the Fourth International. Starting in 1947 they did exceedingly well in parliamentary elections. The LSSP and Bolshevik Samasamajist parties together received almost 17 percent of the total vote in the first postwar election. Subsequently, they continued to get more than 10 percent of the vote until the second election of 1960, and even after that they remained a significant element in parliament and in the country's general political life until the disaster of 1977.⁶⁴

This electoral success and the extensive influence of the LSSP in the labor movement inevitably raised ideological and strategic questions within the party. Writing after the 1964 split, Fourth International leader Ernest Mandel said that "in fact, while being formally a Trotskyist party, the LSSP functioned in several areas comparably to a left Social Democratic party in a relatively 'prosperous' semicolonial country, i.e., it was the

main electoral vehicle of the poor masses, it provided the main leadership of the trade unions." Mandel also argued that "the party leadership itself was not homogeneous. It was composed in reality of two wings, one led by N. M. Perera and Philip Gunawardena which displayed petty-bourgeois nationalist inclinations and was opportunist from the start, the other, genuinely Trotskyist, led by a group of comrades around Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene, Bernard Soysa, Edmund Samarakkody, Doric de Souza and Bala Tampoe."⁶⁵

The two groups mentioned by Mandel split clearly into two parties in the late 1940s, and when they were reunited in 1950 Philip Gunawardena refused to remain in the unified group. Moreover, formal unity of the LSSP and Bolshevik Samasamajist parties did not end the problem presented by the fact that the Trotskyists were making modest but appreciable headway through "reformist" action regardless of how "revolutionary" their rhetoric remained.

On a programmatic level the LSSP continued to be committed to revolutionary change in Ceylonese society. In its 1950 program it proclaimed its "fundamental aims" to be "the overthrow of the Capitalist state," and "seizure of political power by the working class at the head of the toiling masses."⁶⁶ It also declared that the party's "fundamental aims cannot be realized through bourgeois parliaments. The inevitable resistance of the bourgeoisie to their achievement necessarily calls for mass revolutionary action as the only means of realizing the will of the majority."⁶⁷

However, as Robert Kearney observes, "over the next two decades, the party appeared to devote its principal efforts to election contests and the activities of Parliament and local government bodies. The election of 1956, which saw the rout of the UNP, identified by the Samasamajists as the party of the capitalist class, unquestionably sharpened awareness of the possibilities of election contests and led to reconsideration

of the most suitable path to the party's goals."

Kearney has noted that "the 1964 decision to enter the coalition Government with the SLFP represented the triumph of the view that through elections and control of Parliament substantial and worthwhile gains could be achieved. The party schism which accompanied the decision removed the doctrinaire Trotskyist wing of the party and significantly reduced the doctrinal inhibitions on acceptance of the electoral and parliamentary path to the party's goals." An unofficial statement of the LSSP periodical commented in 1970 on "many instances in recent history of crucial mass issues arising in the parliamentary context," and added that "where parliamentary democracy exists and political parties are permitted to represent class and mass interests, it is foolish for any revolutionary to refuse to plunge himself into parliamentary battles."⁶⁸

The LSSP did not give up all allegiance to revolutionary action. Even after the party entered the government in 1964 N. M. Perera observed that "there may be those who will say that we have not at one fell stroke taken over all foreign and local capitalist property lock, stock and barrel, forgetful of the mass upsurge that must accompany it. Such a mass upsurge must be generated by the heightened class consciousness of the toilers, born of the social inequalities and wrongs of the capitalist system."⁶⁹

Even as late as their participation in the Bandaranaike government of the 1970s the LSSP leaders still considered themselves Trotskyists. N. M. Perera told this writer in 1971 that they were Trotskyists but that Trotskyism was not "a narrow, sectarian and dogmatic philosophy." The Samasamajists felt the Trotskyism "must grow and be applied to the circumstances of each individual country." He argued that it was the leaders of the "so-called Fourth International" who had "wandered away from the original ideas and orientation of Trotskyism" and "lived in a very rarified atmo-

sphere." He added that the people of the Fourth International had never been able to build up a party of any significance anywhere.⁷⁰

The fundamental conflict between revolution and reformism remained with the party during its 1970s government experience and certainly contributed to its ultimate ouster from Mrs. Bandaranaike's government. This was clear from statements of various party leaders during that period.

In 1974 Colvin R. de Silva, whom ten years before Ernest Mandel had characterized as "the party's most able theoretician and one of the most powerful orators in all Asia,"⁷¹ gave a lecture to party cadres in which he discussed the point. He noted that "because of the numerical weakness of the industrial working class and the existence of a large petit bourgeoisie . . . the class struggle in contemporary Sri Lanka necessitated a series of maneuvers and alliances to draw sections of other classes toward the working class in 'a common revolutionary struggle.'" He admitted that the United Front government had not changed the bourgeois nature of the state but claimed that it had been "penetrated by a different class consciousness" and had been converted into "an arena of the class struggle."⁷²

Leslie Goonewardene said in the next year that "an ordered development to socialism through a parliamentary system cannot be excluded," but "to say that such a development is not excluded is not . . . the same thing as to say that it is likely. It would be dangerous to come to the facile conclusion that, because the road to socialism commences and proceeds a fair distance within the peaceful framework of parliamentary institutions, this process will be completed in the same manner. It would be particularly irresponsible to come to such a conclusion after the recent example of Chile."⁷³

Shortly before the expulsion of the LSSP from the government N. M. Perera, in his last budget speech to parliament, made a somewhat similar point. He argued that "so-

cialism cannot be achieved by standing still and prating about consolidation. The path to socialism is not dotted with halting places. The march forward has to be pushed ahead with determination."⁷⁴

Thus, forty years after its establishment, the Lanka Sama Samaja party still proclaimed itself to be a Trotskyist party although none of the rest of the world Trotskyist movement recognized it as such. At the same time, because over a long period it had had modest electoral success it was the only avowedly Trotskyist party which had been faced in a very practical way with the quandary of deciding between continued commitment to revolution and the practical benefits of functioning along reformist lines. By the time of its dramatic and drastic electoral defeat in 1977 it had not resolved this contradiction.

Schisms in the LSSP

The Philip Gunawardena Party

Throughout its history the Trotskyist movement of Ceylon/Sri Lanka gave rise to a number of schismatic groups. The two most long-run were the party established by Philip Gunawardena in the early 1950s and the dissident group organized with the blessing of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in 1964.

Philip Gunawardena was among the founders of the LSSP. He and N. M. Perera were thrown out of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India in 1945, and were from then on joint leaders of the rump LSSP. When the two groups again united Gunawardena refused to go along and withdrew his supporters to form the Revolutionary Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Viplavakari Lanka Sama Samaja Party—VLSSP).

Like all of the Ceylonese parties which were originally of Marxist origin the VLSSP had a certain amount of trade-union backing. Gunawardena had taken the lead many years before in organizing the All-Ceylon

Harbor and Dock Workers Union, and it remained for many years his principal labor group. In 1957 it became the major affiliate of a new Central Council of Trade Unions established under VLSSP sponsorship and control. By that time, due to the presence of Philip Gunawardena in the government of Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, the VLSSP had succeeded in establishing a number of other unions.

Although the unions controlled by the Gunawardena party never constituted the largest element in the labor movement they were for many years a significant one. They apparently reached the peak of their membership in 1965, with some 36,841 members. In the following year the number fell to 23,941.⁷⁵

The VLSSP had had varying political fortunes. In 1952 it formed an electoral alliance with the Communist Party. This coalition won four seats in parliament, of whom three were Communists. The victorious VLSSP nominee was Kusumasiri Gunawardena, the wife of Philip, who himself had shortly before been disqualified from running "for offences connected with a strike."⁷⁶

In preparation for the 1956 election the VLSSP joined the Manajana Eksath Peramuna (People's United Front—MEP) coalition. The MEP was centered on the Sri Lanka Freedom Party of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and included in addition to the VLSSP the Basna Peramuna headed by another ex-member of the LSSP, W. Dananayake, and a group of independent politicians.⁷⁷ Five of the fifty-one successful MEP candidates were members of the VLSSP.⁷⁸

Two members of the VLSSP joined the cabinet of Prime Minister Bandaranaike, Philip Gunawardena as minister of agriculture, and P. J. William de Silva as minister of industries. Among other measures, Minister of Agriculture Gunawardena undertook a land distribution campaign which threatened holdings of some of the Buddhist religious institutions. He soon engendered considerable opposition from the Buddhist

clergy. As a consequence of this and of the continued militancy of VLSSP-led unions the right wing of the prime minister's coalition mobilized against Gunawardena's presence in the government.

James Jupp has noted that "the Left was finally defeated by the so-called 'Cabinet strike' in which ten Cabinet Ministers advised Bandaranaike that they would not function in their offices until Philip had been got rid of." These ministers "charged that he was generally incompetent, had exercised massive patronage in the Co-operative Wholesale Establishment, was irresponsibly supporting the portworkers' strikes, had offended by his attacks on private enterprise." As a result of this onslaught, Gunawardena and the VLSSP were forced out of the government in November 1958.⁷⁹

In 1959 the VLSSP adopted the name of the former coalition, the MEP. James Jupp commented that it "rapidly became communalist."⁸⁰ As early as 1954 the VLSSP had adopted the position of favoring Sinhalese as the only official language of Ceylon, instead of Sinhalese and Tamil, a position which the LSSP did not adopt until the middle 1960s.⁸¹

The ex-VLSSP, now the MEP, contested the March 1960 election very energetically, but basically on a Sinhalese Buddhist basis. One of the MEP candidates' election manifestos was banned from the mails because "from beginning to end it breathes anti-Catholic venom," and Gunawardena himself threatened to distribute all of the lands of the Catholic Church if his party won, and to "expel all foreign fascist Catholics." The MEP professed to have high hopes of winning and at one campaign meeting a poster proclaimed that it "had full confidence in Mr. Philip Gunawardena as the next Prime Minister."⁸²

The Gunawardena group had its greatest electoral success in that March 1960 election. It won ten seats in parliament and its vote of 325,832 surpassed that of the LSSP by

about three thousand, although it was only half of that of the SLFP and a bit more than a third what the United National Party received.⁸³

In spite of this success the MEP suffered a disaster in the next election, in July 1960. This was because of "its refusal to cooperate with the SLFP, LSSP, and CP against the UNP in that short-lived Parliament." The effect was "its isolation and . . . a split in its ranks."⁸⁴ In July 1960 the MEP elected only three of its members and got only 102,833 votes, less than a third of what it had gotten four months earlier.⁸⁵

The MEP declined radically after this July 1960 electoral defeat. However, for some time it continued to have some considerable trade union influence and to be considered part of the Left in Ceylonese politics. It participated in the United Left Front in 1963-64, together with the LSSP and Communist Party. When that bloc broke up with the entry of the LSSP in Mrs. Bandaranaike's first government, the MEP did not join the Communist Party in supporting the Bandaranaike administration. Rather, it gravitated rapidly toward alliance with the United National Party. Philip Gunawardena's brother Robert broke away to form a very short-lived United Left Front Party.⁸⁶

However, the MEP apparently still remained optimistic about its possibilities. In the 1965 election it fielded sixty-one candidates. But this election turned out to be a disaster. Although the party received slightly more votes than in July 1960 fifty-five of the MEP nominees did so badly that they lost their deposits. Philip Gunawardena was the only candidate of the party to be elected.⁸⁷ Five years later "the MEP seemed moribund. It failed to secure a single seat in Parliament and its proportion of the popular vote fell below one percent."⁸⁸

Although both Philip and Robert Gunawardena died in 1972, the MEP apparently remained alive, but it no longer had any significant role in national politics. It was reported that at the time of the JVP uprising

in April 1971 the only politicians of any note who supported the JVP were the ex-Maoist S. D. Bandaranaike and Philip Gunawardena, "and they climbed on so many band-wagons that no one was surprised."⁸⁹

On May Day 1977 the MEP participated in a United Red May Day rally which it co-sponsored with the Ceylon Mercantile Union (still controlled by the LSSP [Revolutionary]), and a group known as the Sri Lanka Vimukthi Balagevaya. Dinesh Gunawardena spoke for the MEP and Bala Tampoe for the Ceylon Mercantile Union. There was also a speaker representing the JVP although it held its own May Day rally in another part of Colombo.⁹⁰

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary)

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party [Revolutionary], which in the 1970s changed its name to Revolutionary Marxist Party, remained after 1964 the Ceylonese affiliate of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. It suffered from little of the internal tension between revolutionary purity and relatively successful reformism of the LSSP, although this did not save it entirely from splits.

The LSSP(R) participated in the election of 1965, but did very badly. Robert Kearney has noted that the party won no members of parliament, and that "two LSSP(R) candidates were veteran M.P.'s contesting the same constituencies they had won as LSSP candidates five years earlier. Both lost their deposits. One received about 1,000 votes while the regular LSSP candidate, in losing the contest, secured 16,000 votes. The second obtained only 275 votes while the victorious LSSP candidate received 14,000 votes."⁹¹

Five years later, the LSSP(R) did not offer candidates in the election which resulted in the triumph of the United Front. A year later, Bala Tampoe said that "my party, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party [Revolutionary] . . . did not put forward any candidates in

the campaign, and in a manifesto accused the LSSP and CP of misleading the masses to the belief that the establishment of a coalition government would be a victory for the masses."⁹² Their failure to offer candidates in the 1970 general election did not mean that the party repudiated the idea of electoral participation. It once again put up nominees in the election following the fall of Mrs. Bandaranaike's government in 1977.

Ernest Harsch wrote in the United Secretariat's *Intercontinental Press* about the 1977 campaign of the USEC's Sri Lanka affiliate that "in conjunction with the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU), the Revolutionary Marxist Party (RMP) is conducting an election campaign based on a revolutionary socialist platform. The RMP is running T. N. Perera and Upali Cooray in the Kesbewa and Dehiwela constituencies, while the CMU is fielding Deputy General Secretary Vernon Wijesinghe in Colombo North and M. A. Seneviratne in Kelaniya."

The RMP reemphasized its Trotskyist orthodoxy in this campaign. It called for an "Anti-Capitalist United Front," the purpose of which would be to "struggle for full freedom for the masses and complete equality for all sections of the population," and to oppose "the present or any other capitalist government established by the SLFP or the UNP, separately or in combination with any other parties, be they so-called Left parties or otherwise." Instead, the RMP called for "the perspective of the overthrow of capitalist rule and the establishment of a Workers' and Peasants' Government by the masses," which would have the objective to "set Ceylon on the path to Socialism."⁹³

The LSSP(R) also returned to Trotskyist orthodoxy in its communal attitudes. The *Intercontinental Press* noted in 1970 that "The LSSP(R) has vigorously defended the rights of the persecuted Tamil population."⁹⁴ In an Open Letter which the LSSP(R) sent to the Lanka Sama Samaja party in 1969 it wrote that "many of you will remember the days when the LSSP was the fearless

champion of the working class and all the oppressed sections of the Ceylonese people, irrespective of their race or religion or caste, or whether they were voters or not."⁹⁵ (This last is a reference to the "Indian Tamils" who were deprived of Ceylonese citizenship in 1948). In November 1976 the RMP-controlled Ceylon Mercantile Union was able to get the most important Tamil trade union group, the Ceylon Workers Congress, consisting of plantation workers, to join with it and several other groups to form the Trade Union Coordinating Committee (TUCC). The TUCC played a significant role in the strikes which preceded the end of the Bandaranaike government in 1977.⁹⁶

The LSSP(R)/RMP group continued to control the Ceylon Mercantile Union and Bala Tampoe remained head of the union as well as secretary of the party until 1981. In their public statements at least, the two organizations seemed almost interchangeable. The Trotskyists claimed that the CMU had expanded its influence in organized labor. *Intercontinental Press* described the union in 1977 as being "originally a white-collar union which has since gained a base among other sectors of workers."⁹⁷

The LSSP(R)/RMP was one of the few elements in the "Old Left" which showed any sympathy for the young "New Left" rebels of the JVP. However, Bala Tampoe made it clear that when the movement first appeared in the late 1960s the Trotskyists had little contact with it. In an interview he gave in Australia a few months before the JVP uprising Tampoe said that before August 1970 "the LSSP(R) had no clear idea of what the JVP was, but when they held their meeting on August 10, it was quite clear that it was entirely a genuine mass movement of Sinhala youth."⁹⁸

When the police began to arrest a number of JVP leaders in the weeks before the April 1971 uprising the LSSP(R) came to the JVP's defense. Tampoe explained that "this police action is illegal, and I myself, since I happen to be a criminal lawyer, have, on a decision

of the LSSP(R), defended several of their members in the courts as a public defence of their democratic rights to publicize their political views."⁹⁹

When the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike declared a state of emergency in March 1971 the Ceylon Mercantile Union sent a letter to the prime minister over the signature of Tampoe. It protested strongly against the measure and denied the threat of an armed uprising which was the justification of the state of emergency, as well as protesting various abuses which had occurred under it.¹⁰⁰

After the uprising, the LSSP(R) regularly protested the continued incarceration of several thousand people. It also, understandably, protested against the arrest and jailing for four months of Prins Rajasooriya, assistant secretary of the LSSP(R).¹⁰¹ International Trotskyist periodicals in various countries also gave the JVP leaders space to present their point of view.

The LSSP(R) and RMP kept in constant contact with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. In 1970 a representative of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, Andrew Pulley, then making a speaking tour in Asia and Australia, visited Ceylon. The LSSP(R) sponsored a meeting for him attended by five hundred people.¹⁰²

In 1971, Bala Tampoe attended a national antiwar conference in Sydney, Australia. He was interviewed there by the organ of the Australian affiliate of the United Secretariat. That interview was reprinted in *Intercontinental Press*,¹⁰³ which from time to time during the 1970s carried news about the activities and pronouncements of the United Secretariat's Sri Lanka affiliate.

In spite of its lingering trade union influence, the LSSP(R) remained a minor factor in the far left of Sri Lanka politics. James Jupp has suggested some of the reasons for this. Speaking of both the dissident Samasamajists and the Maoist Communists he said that "the Leftwing critics who had broken away from the LSSP and Communist Party in

1964 over the Coalition tactic had remained ineffectual precisely because they were so firmly rooted in the traditions and social character of the groups which they had left. Bala Tampoe, Shanmugathan, Meryl Fernando, Edmund Samarakkody and Karalasingham differed in their political views from the Coalitionists. They were equally from the generation of the 1940s, from the English-speaking professional classes, from the scholastic tradition of Marxist exegesis. Their polemics were conducted in English and their following was among the university students and clerical workers. Attempts by Revolutionary Samasamajists and Maoists to enter parliament showed their complete isolation from the rural masses. . . ."¹⁰⁴

In 1984 the Revolutionary Marxist Party merged with a group that broke away from the Sri Lanka group which was aligned with the Militant Tendency of Great Britain. The resulting organization was called the Socialist Workers party and continued to be associated with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.¹⁰⁵

Split-Offs from the LSSP(R)

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary) suffered several splits. Undoubtedly internal pressures contributed to these divisions—the two principal original LSSP(R) leaders, Bala Tampoe and Edmund Samarakkody, soon parted ways—but these splits were also influenced by international divisions in the ranks of Trotskyism.

The first group to break away was a faction headed by V. A. Karalasingham, called the "Sakthi group" after a paper it began to publish. They soon left the LSSP(R) to return to the LSSP.¹⁰⁶

Subsequently, dissident elements of the LSSP(R) broke away to form the Revolutionary Workers Party and the Revolutionary Communist League. The latter became affiliated with the International Committee of the Fourth International, headed by Gerry Healy, having sent a message of greetings to

the Workers League, the IC's United States affiliate, when that group launched in 1969 a weekly edition of its periodical *The Bulletin*. At that time the Ceylonese Revolutionary Communist League was publishing two periodicals, one in Sinhalese, *Virodhaya*, and one in Tamil, *Ethirppu*.¹⁰⁷ In the election of 1970 the group, one of whose principal leaders was Wilfred Perera, supported the campaign of the LSSP/SLFP/CP coalition although within a year they were expressing strong opposition to the second government of Mrs. Bandaranaike.¹⁰⁸ The Revolutionary Communist League was by the early 1980s still affiliated with the Healyite International Committee.¹⁰⁹

The Revolutionary Workers Party (RWP) was formed under the leadership of Edmund Samarakkody and Meryl Fernando when they broke away from the LSSP(R) in 1968. It was first called the Revolutionary Samasamajist Party, but soon changed its name.¹¹⁰

In 1971 the RWP established "fraternal relations" with the international Spartacist tendency (sic). In 1974, after a visit of an RWP delegation to the United States, relations between the party and the ist cooled considerably. Nonetheless, in mid-1979 a delegation of the ist visited Sri Lanka and signed a "Unification Agreement" with the Revolutionary Workers Party. Shortly afterward Samarakkody and others attended the First Delegated International Conference of the Spartacists; the Sri Lanka delegation walked out before the meeting was over.

There still continued to be some support for the Spartacists in the RWP and three members of its Political Committee formed an opposition faction. However, when the issue came to a head the principal figure in that faction, Laksiri Fernando, abandoned it. Finally, the entire pro-Spartacist Bolshevik Faction was expelled from the RWP in March 1981. Those expelled then established the Spartacist League of Sri Lanka.¹¹¹ In January 1983 Upali Cooray (admittedly not a friendly observer) claimed that there were left in it only four founding members of the

Sri Lanka Spartacist group.¹¹² In any case it is clear that the Spartacists were one of the smaller groups in the country claiming adherence to Trotskyism.

In mid-1983 it was reported that the Sri Lanka Spartacists were publishing two periodicals, *Lanka Spartacist* in Sinhalese, and *Illangai Spartacist* in Tamil. The format of those papers was copied from that of the publications of the Spartacist League of the United States.¹¹³

In 1981 there was a further split in the Revolutionary Marxist Party when its principal trade union figure, Bala Tampoe of the Ceylon Mercantile Union, broke away. He did so because of criticism which the party leadership had levelled at him and his union for not having participated in a general strike in 1980.¹¹⁴ Although Tampoe continued to regard himself as a Trotskyist, he was no longer associated with any of the factions of International Trotskyism.

The Trotskyists and the Communal Strife of the Mid-1980s

After the savage outburst of communal strife in August 1983 the Sinhalese-Tamil struggle degenerated into a virtual civil war. In the face of the UNP government's increasingly harsh attitude toward the Tamil minority virtually all of the parties and groups professing allegiance to Trotskyism reacted more or less in conformity with their Trotskyist heritage.

A leader of the United Secretariat's Sri Lanka affiliate, writing early in 1985, described the attitudes of the Trotskyists at that time:

In general all the Trotskyist factions and groups have adopted a fairly good position on the National question compared to various Stalinist and Maoist groups. The orthodox groups such as ours . . . has (sic) taken a hard line Leninist position and defended the struggle for self-determination of TAMIL speaking people. We have

also attacked the militarist policies of the government and called for the withdrawal of troops from the North and East.

The Healyite group as well as the small Spartacists . . . have also adopted a similar position. Bala Tampoe has opposed the government policy and called for regional autonomy. The NSSP calls for the right of self determination and the only difference they have with us is that they called the armed Tamil groups "terrorists" while we object to that term. We consider them as liberation fighters. Even the LSSP have fared better since they were voted out of Parliament. Although they oppose a separate Tamil state and criticize Tamil "terrorists" they put the main emphasis on attacking the government policies.

The writer commented also on the general situation in which the Trotskyists found themselves as a result of the communal strife.

There is closer cooperation among the Trotskyist groups and others who have a clear position of defending the Tamils. We are now being harassed by the government because of our opposition to the anti-Tamil and militarist policy of the govt. Our group as well as the Healyites, Spartacists and NSSP have been under constant surveillance and harassment. It is clear that we are fast approaching a situation of neo-fascism and clamp down on opposition. We could see a Latin American type situation soon. And then all democratic opposition will become impossible.¹¹⁵

Conclusions on Ceylonese/ Sri Lankan Trotskyism

The Trotskyist movement in Ceylon/Sri Lanka is unique. The country is one of the few in which avowed Trotskyists had substantial membership in the national legislature and the only one in which the Trotskyist party was the official opposition. It was

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also the only nation in which Trotskyists controlled a number of municipalities. The Ceylonese/Sri Lanka Trotskyists were the only ones who largely dominated the national trade union movement for several decades.

As a consequence of all of these factors Ceylon/Sri Lanka is the only nation in which Trotskyism has been faced with the serious problem of the conflict between revolutionary ethos and reformism. The rest of International Trotskyism regards the Lanka Sama Samaja Party as having decided this dilemma in favor of reformism and therefore has read the LSSP out of the movement.

However, like most of the rest of International Trotskyism, in Ceylon/Sri Lanka the movement has been cursed with a great deal of factionalism, particularly after 1964. Although by the early 1980s there were at least eight different factions, Upali Cooray is the authority for the judgment that only the original LSSP, the NSSP which broke away in 1977, the USC's Revolutionary Marxist Party, and the Socialist Worker Group were "of any significance."¹¹⁶

Chile was one of the few countries in which Trotskyism became an appreciable force in national politics in the 1930s. However, this situation was short-lived. Thereafter Chilean Trotskyism suffered from the problem of "entrism," underwent the process of splitting, reunification and further splintering which was characteristic of the movement throughout the world, and was reduced to a splinter faction even in the country's left-wing politics.

Chilean Trotskyism in the 1930s

The Trotskyist movement in Chile had its origins in a split which developed within the Communist Party of Chile during the dictatorship of General Carlos Ibáñez between 1927 and 1931. The founder of the Chilean Communist Party, Luis Emilio Recabarren, had died late in 1924. During the period between his death and the advent of the Ibáñez regime in May 1927 Recabarren's dual role as head of the Communist Party and leader of the largest trade union organization, the Federación Obrera de Chile (FOCH), had been divided, with Senator Manuel Hidalgo being the major public leader of the party and Elias Lafferte succeeding Recabarren as head of FOCH.

During the Ibáñez period serious differences developed between the element centering on Lafferte, of which the principal political leader was Carlos Contreras Larca, and the group led by Manuel Hidalgo, seconded by Humberto Mendoza (also known by his party pseudonym as Jorge Lavín). The strength of the former group

Material in this chapter dealing with the period before 1969 unless otherwise noted is adapted from Robert J. Alexander: *Trotskyism in Latin America*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1973.

tended to be centered in the nitrate and copper mining areas of the north and the coal mining region near Concepción, while that of the Hidalgo faction centered particularly in the Santiago area, where Hidalgo had been the principal founder and organizer of the party.

Although the controversy originally had had no ideological basis it began to acquire one when the South American Secretariat of the Communist International, located in Montevideo, started to intervene. After some hesitation, the Comintern threw the weight of its authority and finances behind the Lafferte-Contreras Labarca group.

As a consequence of this quarrel the Communist Party emerged after the fall of Ibáñez in August 1931 as two rival groups, both calling themselves Partido Comunista (Sección Chilena de la Internacional Comunista). In the first election after the ouster of the dictatorship the two parties ran Lafferte and Hidalgo as rival candidates for the presidency. Although the Hidalgo faction had some hope at the beginning of the campaign that their nominee might stage an upset victory, the entry of ex-President Arturo Alessandri into the campaign as the principal nominee of the left ended these hopes.

The two Communist factions took strongly contrasting positions on several issues. The Lafferte faction, following the Comintern's then current line in favor of Communist "dual unionism," hastened to revive FOCH, again with Lafferte as its secretary general, while refusing to have anything to do with "legal" unions which had been established between 1924 and 1931 in conformity with legislation passed in September 1924. The Hidalgo faction on the other hand called for unification of the trade union movement, favored working both in the legal unions and the "illegal" ones, and had some strength in both of those labor groups.

The attempt by the Lafferte party to foment a military insurrection in December 1931 (in conformity with the extremism which then marked Comintern policy) also

separated the two Communist groups. The Hidalgo faction strongly opposed the attempted revolt.

The two parties also had strongly contrasting attitudes toward the so-called "Socialist Republic" which was established by a coup on June 4, 1932. That regime was headed at first by Colonel Marmaduque Grove, the founder of the Air Force, and was supported by a group of small socialist parties as well as by leaders of the legal unions, the Masons, and by some people who had been associated with the Ibáñez regime.

The Lafferte party was loyal to the current Comintern line in unequivocally opposing the Marmaduque Grove Socialist Republic. The Hidalgo group, on the other hand, gave critical support to the regime and presented it with a seven point program which called upon it to arm the workers and disarm right-wing elements, to socialize the means of production, turn over control of the municipalities to the workers, and called for "formation of committees of workers and peasants . . . and recognition of control of production and distribution by these."¹

When opponents of Grove removed him from the leadership of the Socialist Republic and exiled him to Easter Island the Hidalgoites called a general strike of protest which was widely supported by the workers and lasted for three days. They also joined with some of the small socialist groups to form the Alianza Socialista Revolucionaria.

In elections held in November 1932, following the overthrow of the Socialist Republic, the Hidalgoites supported a broad coalition of socialist parties which ran Marmaduque Grove for president. They ran their own list of candidates for congress, electing Manuel Hidalgo to the Senate and Emilio Zapata to the Chamber of Deputies.

Early in 1933 the Hidalgo party held its first congress and established itself definitively as a party separate from the Lafferte-Contreras Labarca one. By that time the Hidalgo group had also clearly evolved into a Trotskyist organization. This development

was due not only to the consistent support that the Stalinist-controlled Comintern had given the Lafferte group but also to the fact that the Hidalgoites had come to agree with the positions taken by the International Left Opposition, including its opposition to "Socialism in one country," to the theory of "social fascism," and to the Stalinists' endorsement of a "government of workers and peasants" instead of "the dictatorship of the proletariat."

As a consequence, the 1933 congress of the Hidalgo party made two important decisions. It changed its name to Izquierda Comunista (IC—Communist Left) and decided to join the International Left Opposition.

During the next few years, the Izquierda Comunista was more important than the Communist Party, both in the trade union movement and in the country's general politics. Within the labor movement they continued to be active in both the legally recognized unions and those which did not have legal authorization. In 1934 they aided in forming the Confederación Nacional de Sindicatos Legales as the central organization of the legal unions. The IC largely dominated the Comité Unico de la Construcción, to which were affiliated most of the country's construction workers' unions, the preponderance of which were unrecognized organizations.

The IC continued to have some representation in Congress and other legislative bodies. In 1935 the Trotskyist organization—in apparent violation of the international movement's opposition to popular frontism—joined with the Socialist Party, the Partido Democrático, and the Radical Socialist Party, to form the Bloc de Izquierda (Bloc of the Left), which worked together in parliament and in the electoral field. Alliance with the Socialists and the Partido Democrático might have been in conformity with the Trotskyist support for a United Front, but cooperation with the middle-class Radical Socialists certainly was not.

During the 1933–1937 period the Izquierda Comunista was faced with two prin-

cipal rivals in organized labor and left politics generally, the Communists and the new Socialist Party (psch), which had been established early in 1933 almost simultaneously with the reorganization of the Trotskyists as Izquierda Comunista. The psc was the result of the merger of several small Socialist parties which had appeared after the fall of Ibáñez and which had supported the Grove Socialist Republic in June 1932 and Grove's presidential candidacy later in that year. Most of the leaders of the legal unions also were among the founders of the psch.

At the inception of the Partido Socialista relations between it and the Izquierda Comunista were markedly hostile. As the formation of the Left Bloc indicates, this situation soon began to change. Particularly after the formation of the Popular Front in 1936 the IC leaders became increasingly convinced that there was no "political room" for a third major working-class party. Also, they became growingly disillusioned in the International Left Opposition, no longer feeling that it had much future as a viable world revolutionary party. For their part the Socialists, fearing to be outmaneuvered in the Popular Front by an alliance of the Stalinist Party and the Radicals, became increasingly receptive to the idea of a merger with the Izquierda Comunista.

The upshot of this development was the entry of a majority of the leaders and members of the IC into the Socialist Party in 1937. It is clear that this was in no sense the kind of "entrism" maneuver which Trotsky had recommended to his followers in France and elsewhere. There is no indication that the ex-IC people who entered the psch continued to function as an organized faction within their new party. Nor was any relationship maintained between these (ex?)-Trotskyists who went into the Socialist Party and their comrades who remained outside. In subsequent years the ex-Trotskyists became leading figures in the Socialist Party as well as in several splinter groups of the psch.

A minority of Chilean Trotskyists refused

to enter the Socialist Party. Late in 1935 in the face of growing cooperation between the IC and the PSCh, the Santiago Regional Committee of the Izquierda Comunista broke away to form the Grupo Bolchevique-Leninista, which announced its continued loyalty to the International Left Opposition. In 1937 it changed its name to Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR—Revolutionary Labor Party).

At the Founding Congress of the Fourth International the POR was the Chilean section represented at that session.² Pierre Naville, in his report to the Congress, estimated the membership of the POR at 100.³

However, the POR was not the only Chilean group claiming loyalty to International Trotskyism. In 1938 a dissident element broke away from the Juventud Socialista, the youth section of the Socialist Party. It took the name Grupo Internacionalista Obrero, and then in 1940 assumed the name Partido Obrero Internacionalista (POI). Efforts to bring these two groups together were unavailing during the period before Trotsky's death. They engaged in extensive polemics with one another. Also, in the election of 1938 the POR named Marmaduke Grove as its presidential nominee while the POI supported the victorious Popular Front candidate, the Radical, Pedro Aguirre Cerda (whom Grove also supported).

The report on Latin America to the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International in May 1940 noted that the POI had recently merged with two other splinters from the Socialist Party, the Partido Socialista Revolucionaria and the Izquierda Revolucionaria Socialista. It also observed that negotiations for merger of the POI and POR were continuing.⁴

Reunion and New Schisms in Chilean Trotskyism

Unity between the Partido Obrero Revolucionario and the Partido Obrero Internacionalista, the two Chilean groups declaring their allegiance to the Fourth International at the

time of Trotsky's death, was finally achieved in June 1941. The Fourth International played a major role in this. Terence Phelan (Sherry Mangan) of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party attended the unity congress as a delegate from the Fourth International.

The new united Trotskyist group was called the Partido Obrero Revolucionario. Diego Henríquez, secretary general of the old POR, was named the first secretary general of the new party.

Although the new POR never became a major factor in the country's trade union movement they were active in several unions. These included the organizations of municipal, construction, textile, leather, printing and railroad workers.

The POR also engaged in electoral politics. In the 1942 presidential election they ran their then secretary general, Humberto Valenzuela but he received very few votes. In the congressional elections of 1945 the POR nominees received about 1,000 votes, but none of them was elected.

Meanwhile, the Chilean Trotskyists suffered two new splits. In 1942 a group including a number of the traditional leaders of the POR broke with the party to establish the Liga Obrera Leninista. In August 1946 the Liga people were reincorporated in the POR in what was called the First Extraordinary Conference of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario.

A further split in Chilean Trotskyism took place in the early 1950s. A dissident element of Trotskyists within the Municipal Workers Union opposed the leadership of the POR. It was the only Trotskyist element which at that point had any influence in organized labor.

With the formation of the new central labor organization (CUT—Central Unica de Trabajadores) in 1953, the Trotskyists had some secondary influence in the organization. Humberto Valenzuela, Trotskyist leader among the municipal workers, was elected to the Santiago regional executive of CUT in 1957 and to its national committee in the following year.⁵

There is no information available about the denouement of the split of the 1950s. During the 1960s the Chilean Trotskyist movement was still divided into two rival groups. One was the Partido Obrero Revolucionario, which during the 1950s had become associated with the anti-Pablo International Committee of the Fourth International.

The POR joined forces in 1964 with dissident elements from the Socialist and Communist parties to establish the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR). In the beginning one of the principal leaders of the MIR was Luis Vitale, who by then was the major Trotskyist leader of Chile. This Trotskyist faction continued to work within the MIR during the rest of the 1960s.

The other Chilean Trotskyist group was the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista). It was associated with the International Secretariat of the Fourth International during the split in the 1950s and with its Latin American Bureau. Then when the Latin American Bureau under the leadership of J. Posadas broke away to form its own version of the Fourth International, the POR(T) became part of that tendency. The POR(T) had some very tangential influence in the labor movement. Ten of its members were said to have been delegates to the Third Congress of the Central Unica de Trabajadores de Chile in September 1962. However, most of the time and energy of the POR(T) was taken up with publication of its periodical, *Lucha Obrera*.

Chilean Trotskyism After 1969

During the 1970s and early 1980s at least five of the tendencies of International Trotskyism maintained some kind of organization in Chile (or after 1973, among Chilean exiles). These were the United Secretariat, the Lambertist CORQI, the Morenoists, the Spartacists, and the Posadas faction. Each of the groups had to develop an approach to the Unidad Popular government of President

Salvador Allende at the beginning of the period, and all suffered immensely from the persecution of the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet after September 1973.

From 1964 until 1969 those Chileans associated with the United Secretariat had worked within the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR). One of the major Trotskyist leaders, Humberto Valenzuela, was a member of the National Secretariat of the MIR between 1965 and 1967. In 1969, the Trotskyists were expelled from the MIR for opposing the "foquista" guerrilla war tactics supported by the majority of the MIR leadership. They then formed the Frente Revolucionario. In December 1972 that organization merged with another group, the Tendencia Revolucionaria Octubre (aligned with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States in USEC), to establish the Partido Socialista Revolucionario, which was soon recognized as the Chilean section of the United Secretariat.

In describing the activity of Humberto Valenzuela during the Popular Unity government period, Luis Vitale, another USEC follower in Chile, defined the attitude of the Chilean USEC Trotskyist faction during that period. He wrote that "without sectarianism, he worked alongside the pro-Allende workers in building the *cordones industriales*, the *comandos comunales*, and other organs of popular power, at the same time criticizing the reformists. In this task, Humberto made a united front with the MIR, and was elected national leader of the Frente de Trabajadores Revolucionarios. . . . He was a candidate in the last CUT elections."⁶

The Partido Socialista Revolucionario published a periodical, *Revolución Permanente*. Its February 1973 issue had articles which defined the USEC Trotskyists' position toward the Allende regime. One of these said that ". . . the workers' movement suffers from one weakness: It lacks a revolutionary leadership. The UP has demonstrated its reformist character, its revolu-

tionary verbalism, its scorn for action by the exploited, its weak and conciliatory attitude toward the bourgeoisie and its inconsistencies." The article urged the Trotskyists to take part in all rank and file organizations "to form organs of proletarian power, to help form a true revolutionary leadership in the heat of the struggle, to defeat and destroy the bourgeois regime, and to unflinchingly advance toward socialism."

Another article in the same issue of *Revolución Permanente* argued that "The government and the UP insist on sticking to their peaceful road to socialism. But the proletariat is becoming aware of the fact that this is not its road. . . ." The article then presented a nine-point program of "immediate goals" which included "the formation of People's Militia focusing on key mass fronts," nationalization of all land "and that it be turned over to the peasants for use through the Consejos Comunales Campesinos [Peasant Community Councils]," and "formation of a Revolutionary United Front as a step toward the unification of the revolutionary left, reaching agreement in every workers' front on specific points of agreement between the various organizations."⁷

There is some indication that the majority leadership in the United Secretariat was at the time somewhat lukewarm towards the USEC's Chilean affiliate. Thus, in December 1971 USEC issued a statement which began by the call to "Organize Democratic Councils of the Workers, Peasants, Slum Dwellers and Students! struggle for the Arming of the Proletariat and the Formation of a Popular Militia! Build a Revolutionary party!" This statement made no mention of the Chilean Trotskyists but centered its praise instead on the Fidelista MIR. It noted that "the forces organized or influenced by the MIR will unquestionably play an important role in building the revolutionary party that is the condition *sine qua non* for the victory of the Chilean workers and peasants. . . ." It also noted that "the necessary criticism of the contradictions and weaknesses

of the MIR must not at all stand in the way of recognizing the important role the MIR is playing as a catalyzer at the moment, or of appreciating the programmatic rectifications or advances it makes. . . ."⁸

With the overthrow of the Allende regime and installation of the military dictatorship of General Pinochet, the Trotskyists, along with all the rest of the Chilean Left, were severely persecuted. Luis Vitale and Humberto Valenzuela, among others, were arrested and ultimately deported from Chile.⁹ Early in 1976 six members of the Liga Comunista, "a Chilean sympathizing group of the Fourth International" (USEC), were tried under the State Internal Security Act of the dictatorship for holding "regular meetings of a subversive character."¹⁰ The Liga Comunista was a group which had broken away from the MIR in August 1973 and published an underground periodical, *Combate*.¹¹

The Partido Socialista Revolucionario apparently survived the persecution of the Pinochet regime. An article in the USEC periodical *Inprecor* in September 1982 noted that "in certain zones or localities, mass work can perhaps be combined with an organization of the revolutionary currents, such as the MIR, sectors arising from the crisis in the SP, Trotskyist militants. That is the way opened to revolutionary Marxist intervention. . . . It is towards this perspective that the activity of the comrades of the Partido Socialista Revolucionario, Chilean section of the IVth International, is directed."¹² In May 1984 the USEC Trotskyists in Chile began publication of a mimeographed journal, *Ofensiva Socialista*, the first number of which called for preparation for a general strike against the regime.¹³

During at least part of the period under review, the Lambertist CORQI faction of International Trotskyism was represented by two organizations in Chile. The original affiliate was the Organización Marxista Revolucionaria (OMR). However, at some point during the Allende regime a group with its

principal center in the Concepción area broke away from the OMR to form the Partido Obrero Marxista Revolucionario (POMR).¹⁴ One of these organizations was closely aligned with the Política Obrera group in Argentina.

The attitude of the CORQI affiliates toward the Allende regime is reflected in the ex-post-facto denunciation of that regime in November 1973 by the International Bureau of the Lambertist group. That statement said that the Allende government had been a "popular front" and denounced claims that it had been "partially progressive because it was anti-imperialist."¹⁵

The attitude of the faction associated with Política Obrera played a role in the split which developed between that Argentine group and the Lambertist international. The International Bureau of CORQI denounced a statement of the Chileans that "the present unions in Chile are workers unions. . . ."¹⁶

There is no information available as to whether any affiliate of the CORQI survived the persecutions of the Pinochet dictatorship. One unfriendly source claimed in 1982 that no Lambertist group existed at that time in Chile.¹⁷

The Morenoist current in International Trotskyism obtained a Chilean affiliate sometime after the overthrow of the Allende regime. It was reported in mid-1984 that "among the militants of Izquierda Socialista are former members of the MIR who broke with this organization because it capitulated to the government of Popular Unity of Allende, the majority of a Trotskyist organization called Liga Comunista, members of the Liga Bolchevique and many students and trade union activists." In 1983 the Izquierda Socialista established a youth organization, Juventud Socialista, which a year later was reported as having "hundreds of members." It also was publishing an underground periodical, *El Socialista*, which was said to have "a circulation of various thousands each issue." In mid-1984 the Izquierda Socialista was calling not only for the overthrow of

Pinochet but for the immediate election of a constituent assembly. It was urging a general strike to get rid of the dictatorship.¹⁸

Even the international Spartacist tendency developed a fraternal organization among the Chileans, at least for a period in the late 1970s. This group appears to have had its following particularly among Chileans who had gone into exile after seizure of power by the military. Those establishing the Organización Trotskyista Revolucionaria (OTR—Revolutionary Trotskyist Organization) late in 1972 were members of the pro-U.S. Socialist Workers Party faction, the Tendencia Revolucionaria Octubre, who refused to go along with the merger of that group with the Frente Revolucionaria Trotskyista to form the Partido Socialista Revolucionario.

Once in exile the OTR members entered into contact with the various tendencies of International Trotskyism. In May 1975 there was finally published a "Declaration of Fraternal Relations" between the OTR and the international Spartacist tendency.¹⁹ This organization still existed almost two years later, when it issued a proclamation denouncing a plebiscite which had been organized by the Pinochet regime.²⁰

Finally, the Posadas version of the Fourth International also continued to have a Chilean affiliate at least until the end of the Allende regime. Of all the Trotskyist tendencies in Chile the Posadas group was probably the most sympathetic toward the Allende government. The issue of the first fortnight of June 1972 of the periodical of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskyista) published an article by Posadas himself entitled "The Advance of the Government of Allende and the Tasks to Pass from a Revolutionary State to a Workers State." This and the lead editorial of the periodical carried no denunciations of the "popular front" nature of the Allende regime or of its revolutionary bona fides. They did propose some very radical measures. Thus, "Our party proposes that in place of a plebiscite, as is pro-

Trotskyism in China

posed by the Socialist Party, the Government and the UP, suggest and carry out the dissolution of Parliament and call a Popular Assembly, whose representatives will be elected from centers of labor and production."²¹

There is little direct evidence available as to whether the FOR(T) survived during the Pinochet regime. As late as December 1976, however, the Posadistas were claiming that their Chilean periodical, *Lucha Obrera*, was still appearing.²²

Differences over the Communist International's policies during "the second Chinese Revolution" (1925-1927) were one of the first major issues which differentiated International Trotskyism from Stalin's followers in the Comintern. Although there were Chinese Communist leaders who took positions similar to those of Leon Trotsky during the 1925-1927 period they only became aware of this community of ideas subsequently. When a Trotskyist movement finally emerged, it included among its initiators some of the principal founders and early leaders of the Chinese Communist Party. Chinese Trotskyism existed in the country for about two decades, and as an exile movement for at least two decades more. It began to be revived in nearby Hong Kong in the 1970s.

Early Years of the Chinese Communist Party

Two people were the pioneers in organizing the Communist Party of China. One of those was Li Dazhao, Head Librarian of Peking University, a Marxist intellectual writing by the time of World War I and one of the first Chinese to write extensively in praise of the Bolshevik Revolution. In 1918 he organized a Marxist Study Society in Peking. It was Li whom the first Comintern representatives, sent to China in the spring of 1920, were instructed to contact.¹

The second figure in the founding of Chinese communism was Ch'en Tu-hsiu (Chen Duxiu). He had participated in the 1911 revolution which overthrew the Chinese Empire and in 1915 had established a magazine, *New Youth*, in Shanghai, which became a major voice against Confucianism and in favor of cultural change, particularly the use

of the vernacular in the written Chinese language. He did not become a Marxist until 1920.²

Grigori Voitinsky and Yang Mingzhai, the Comintern representatives, visited both Li Dazhao and Chu Tu-hsiu. They aided the latter in setting up the first avowedly Communist local group in Shanghai in the summer of 1920. That group made *New Youth* its official organ and established an illegal periodical, *The Communist*. It also established a Socialist Youth Corps among whose founders were P'eng Shu-tse (Peng Shuzhi) and Liu Shao-chi (Liu Shaoqi). Soon other Communist groups were established in Wuhan, Changsha, Canton and Tsinan.

The Comintern representatives and Ch'en Tu-hsiu decided that for the purpose of developing more or less rapidly a group of cadres for the Chinese Communist movement it would be useful to send a group of young people to the University of the Toilers of the East, which had been established in Moscow. A group of somewhere between thirty and sixty Chinese students arrived in Moscow by August 1921. Among those were P'eng Shu-tse, Liu Shao-chi, Ren Zuomin, and Xiao Jingguang.³

Meanwhile the First Congress of the Chinese Communist Party met in Shanghai, attended by eleven to thirteen delegates representing the fifty-some members then belonging to the Communist groups in various cities. Although neither Li Dazhao nor Ch'en Tu-hsiu was able to attend the meeting, it adopted a draft program drawn up by the latter as well as a party constitution written by Chang Kuo-t'ao (Zhang Guotao). Two Comintern representatives, one of whom was Hendrick Sneevliet (Maring), were in attendance.

The ccr congress decided to establish a Labor Secretariat. It soon came to gain some influence in the nascent trade-union movement and in May 1922 organized the First National Labor Congress which was attended by 160 delegates claiming to represent unions with 300,000 members.

In July 1922 the Chinese Communist Party held its Second Congress. It adopted a "Manifesto" which set forth the party's objectives. This document carried a passage of great interest in view of the ccr's later history. This was a warning against workers becoming "the appendage of the petty bourgeoisie," and urging that they "must fight for their own class interests."⁴

However, the Comintern's representative, Sneevliet-Maring, had been meeting in Canton with Sun Yat-sen, leader of the Chinese Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang (KMT), concerning possible alliance between the Kuomintang and the ccr. Sun was the political leader of a regional regime based on Canton which was dominated by his party and was already laying plans to bring about a revolution throughout the country which hopefully would end the warlord system from which the country had suffered virtually since the end of the Empire in 1911.

On Sneevliet-Maring's request, a meeting of the ccr Central Committee was held in August 1922 to discuss cooperation between the KMT and the Communists. Among those present were Li Dazhao, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Ts'ai Hosen, Zhang Tailei, Cao Shangde, and Chang Kuo-t'ao.

Sneevliet-Maring reported that he felt that Kuomintang-Communist cooperation was essential because the KMT "was a strong national revolutionary political party with members in all strata of Chinese society." However, he said, Sun Yat-sen did not regard the ccr to be an equal to the Kuomintang as a national party, and so would agree to "cooperation" only on the basis of Communists entering the KMT as individual members, a policy which Sneevliet apparently endorsed.

There has been discussion of whether Sneevliet was carrying out specific instructions which he had received from the Comintern, or was merely giving his own interpretation to what he thought the Comintern policy to be.⁵ In any case, there is a certain irony involved in the fact that Sneevliet,

who was ultimately to become a Trotskyist himself, was the one to take the first step in the evolution of a policy which Trotsky was to denounce so roundly.

The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism in Moscow

There were two sources of a Trotskyist current within the ranks of the Chinese Communists. One of these was the group of Chinese students at the University of the Toilers of the East and Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow; the other was opposition within the CCP leadership in China to the policy which Sneevliet-Maring had originally advocated and which became official Comintern policy early in 1923.

Although it was customary for foreigners who came to Moscow for training to become members of the Soviet Communist Party it was decided to make an exception of the Chinese. Many of them were organized instead into a "Moscow branch" of the Chinese Communist Party. P'eng Shu-tse was chosen secretary of that branch in August 1921.⁶

The Chinese students participated in a variety of activities. This was particularly the case with P'eng. He attended the First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East held in Moscow and Petrograd in January-February 1922. Various officials of the Comintern, including its Chairman, Gregory Zinoviev, addressed this meeting.⁷ P'eng Shu-tse also was a delegate to the Fifth Congress of the Communist International in June-July 1924, shortly before his return home. He later said that he was surprised that Trotsky had not attended that session.⁸

By the time P'eng returned to China he had begun to have doubts about the situation in the Soviet party and in the Comintern. As a member of the Soviet party he had attended meetings at which the emerging struggle of Trotsky against the party leadership was first discussed. Although he had some sympathy at that time for the posi-

tions of Trotsky, he seems not to have taken a strong stand one way or the other on them.⁹

However, P'eng had begun to be critical of the emerging Comintern policy of close collaboration with the Kuomintang in China. He was unsatisfied with arguments of Russian Comintern officials in defense of it, returning to China with an inclination to be critical towards the KMT-CCP alliance.¹⁰

Subsequent to P'eng's departure from Moscow, some of the Chinese Communist students who remained tended to gravitate towards Trotsky and his ideas. Joseph Miller has noted that "this grouping of very early Chinese Trotskyists were mainly younger activists who had been sent to Moscow to study during the years of revolution. They had no real experience with the revolutionary struggle inside of China. P'eng argues that 'they were won over to Trotskyism solely on the basis of Trotsky's writings and the influence of Karl Radek, who was the rector of Sun Yat-sen University at that time.'"¹¹

Meanwhile, the Stalinists within the Chinese Communist Party apparatus in Moscow and within the Comintern had become anxious about the influence of the Left Opposition among the Chinese students in Moscow and within the CCP in China itself. A number of steps were taken to counteract this influence.

Karl Radek was succeeded by Pavel Mif as head of Sun Yat-sen University and a decision was taken to concentrate all of the Chinese students in that institution where they could be more closely watched by Mif. In June-July 1928 the Sixth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was held in Moscow, and control over the organization was assumed by Wang Ming, Stalin's most stalwart supporter within the CCP ranks.

The Trotskyist students in the meantime formally organized a faction and elected a committee to lead it late in September or early in October 1928. At its height the group numbered among its members and

sympathizers 150 of the 400 Chinese students at Sun Yat-sen University.

Finally, when it became known in Moscow that Ch'en Tu-hsiu had joined the ranks of the Left Opposition, there began a strenuous purge of the Chinese students in Moscow early in the summer of 1929. The CPU descended on Sun Yat-sen University, arresting about 200 suspected Trotskyists, most of whom apparently were sent to spend the rest of their lives in Stalinist jails and concentration camps. Sun Yat-sen University itself was closed down.¹²

Even before these events the Russians had begun to send a number of the "doubtful" Chinese back home. When two of these, Lu Yen and Liang Gangiao, were sent home in 1928 they began to organize the first avowedly Trotskyist group in China, although it was outside of the CCP. Ultimately it was two Trotskyist sympathizers recently returned from Moscow who put some of the CCP leaders who had become increasingly critical of the party's line into contact with Trotsky's criticism of the Comintern's Chinese policy. That was the catalyst which led to the development of a Trotskyist movement in China.¹³

Controversy Over CCP Policy in the Second Chinese Revolution

While Trotsky's political positions were gaining open support among the Chinese Communist students in the Soviet Union some of the top leaders of the CCP were on their own developing a critical attitude towards the Comintern's policy in China which was similar to that of Trotsky. This policy was the one which had first been presented by Sneevliet-Maring in the August 1922 Central Committee meeting.

Shortly after that meeting Communists began to join the KMT. At that point there apparently was no significant opposition to that idea. Among those who entered the Kuomintang and helped organize branches of it in various Chinese cities were Li Dazhao

and Ch'en Tu-hsiu. The policy was strongly endorsed by the Third Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in June 1923.¹⁴

Meanwhile, both the organized labor movement and the peasant organizations were expanding rapidly. The Communists were playing important roles in the growth of both of these movements, and this fact made the question of the relations between the CCP and the KMT increasingly crucial.

On January 12, 1923, five months after the CCP Central Committee's decision to work within the Kuomintang, the Executive Committee of the Communist International had adopted a resolution stressing the desirability of cooperation between the CCP and the KMT, a motion which Leon Trotsky opposed. It called the KMT "the only serious national-revolutionary group in China . . . based partly on the liberal-democratic bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, partly on the intelligentsia and workers." Consequently, it was "expedient for members of the CCP to remain in the Kuomintang."

But at the same time the resolution directed the CCP to "maintain its independent organization with a strictly centralized apparatus" while "avoiding any conflict with the national-revolutionary movement." The CCP was told that "while supporting the Kuomintang in all campaigns on the national-revolutionary front, to the extent that it conducts an objectively correct policy, the CCP should not merge with it and should not during these campaigns haul down its flag."¹⁵

Soon after the passage of this resolution the Soviet diplomatic agent in China, A. A. Joffe, signed a statement with Sun Yat-sen which proclaimed that China was not ready for communism "or even the Soviet system," and that "China's most important and most pressing problems are the completion of national unification and the attainment of full national independence."¹⁶

As a consequence of Comintern policy, supported by the leadership of the CCP, the Communists continued to collaborate with

the Kuomintang even after the death of Sun Yat-sen. Apparently the CCP gained from this collaboration.

In January 1925 the Communists held their Fourth Congress, in Shanghai. It was reported that the party had one thousand members and the Youth Corps had some three thousand. At that congress P'eng Shu-tse was a delegate from the Moscow Branch and was elected to the Central Committee of the CCP. He then became the Politburo member in charge of party propaganda activities.¹⁷

As a consequence of the Communists' involvement in both the labor and peasant movements the party membership grew very rapidly. By November 1925 it was claiming 10,000 members, while the Youth Corps had 9,000.¹⁸

However, doubts were being expressed within the CCP leadership about the alliance with the Kuomintang. P'eng Shu-tse as early as December 1924 published an article in the party periodical *New Youth*, of which he had become the editor, emphasizing the need for the proletariat to take the lead in the Chinese national revolution. He had at least tacit consent for this article from Ch'en Tu-hsiu.¹⁹

By late 1925 Ch'en himself was clearly having serious doubts about continuing the alliance of the CCP with the KMT, at least in the form in which it then existed. At a CCP Central Committee Plenary session in October 1925 he urged that "we should be ready immediately to withdraw from the Kuomintang." But his position was rejected by the Central Committee, with the support of the Comintern representative, Voitinsky.²⁰

A crisis was presented to the Communists on March 20, 1926, when Chiang Kai-shek, who had succeeded Sun Yat-sen as principal leader of the KMT, carried out a coup in Canton, arresting more than fifty Communists who were active in the political section of the Nationalist military. Although Chiang shortly released these people, a few weeks

later he decreed that no Communists could hold strategic positions in the KMT or organizations dependent on it.²¹

In the face of this the Shanghai committee of the CCP resolved that there should be a "reconsideration" of the party's alliance with the Kuomintang. P'eng Shu-tse was sent to Canton with his wife, Ch'en Pi-lan, by the Shanghai organization. P'eng summoned a meeting of a special committee of Communists and left-wing Kuomintang people to consider relations with Chiang and the KMT right wing. On the insistence of the Comintern representative, Borodin, that meeting rejected P'eng's suggestion that Communists withdraw from the Kuomintang but continue to cooperate with it as an independent organization.²²

Harold Isaacs has written that "the pressure to regain some measure of party independence was so strong that in June the Central Committee decided to propose that the Communist party resume its own existence and replace its current submersion inside the Kuomintang with a formal two-party bloc. This decision was sent to the Comintern in Moscow where it was immediately and drastically condemned and rejected," largely because the idea was too close to what Trotsky was advocating within the Comintern.²³

James Miller has noted that in mid-July 1926 a further Plenum of the Central Committee of the CCP met in Shanghai. It rejected a motion submitted by P'eng and Ch'en Tu-hsiu for withdrawal of Communists from membership in the KMT. Again the Comintern representative strongly opposed the resolution.²⁴

Without being aware of the polemics of Leon Trotsky over Comintern policy in China, P'eng and some other Chinese Communists had reached conclusions similar to those of Trotsky, even using one of his most characteristic phrases, "permanent revolution." Thus, in an article appearing in January 1927 P'eng wrote that "the Chinese revolution is a national democratic revolution

at present. . . . It should be finally understood that national revolution is not the last stage of the revolution; *it is only a road leading to the socialist revolution.* . . . The ultimate objective of Leninism is to lead humanity as a whole from the oppression of various societies to the freedom of communism. Thus '*permanent revolution*' should be understood to mean the process leading directly from the national revolution into the proletarian revolution."²⁵

The correctness of the doubts of P'eng and Ch'en about the alliance with the Kuomintang was confirmed in April 1927 when, after his troops captured Shanghai, Chiang ordered the virtual extermination of the Communists in the areas under his control. Yet this did not end the faith of Stalin's Comintern in the KMT-CCP alliance. This faith was transferred to a relationship with the "left-wing" Kuomintang government which was established in the city of Wuhan.

On April 24, 1927 the Fifth Congress of the CCP opened in Wuhan, with over one hundred delegates representing a reported 50,000 party members. The tendency of this congress was to blame Ch'en Tu-hsiu and those who were allied with him for the disaster in the Chiang Kai-shek controlled area. However, Ch'en was reelected secretary general; P'eng lost his position in the Politburo while remaining in the Central Committee.²⁶

In July 1927 the left-wing Kuomintang regime also turned on the Communists, arresting and killing as many of them as it could lay its hands on. On that same day, Ch'en Tu-hsiu resigned as CCP secretary general, because "he could not continue as secretary general because the Comintern wanted the Communists to apply its policy but did not allow them to withdraw from the Kuomintang." Comintern representative Borodin agreed with other CCP leaders to place the whole blame for the Chinese Communists' disaster on Ch'en and his allies.²⁷

As a consequence of this agreement, a

rump meeting of the CCP Central Committee on August 7, 1927 dismissed Ch'en as secretary general. It blamed the party's failures on his "opportunism"—which, of course, had been dictated by the Comintern [although this was not stated]. The meeting also decided to substitute a policy of violent insurrections in various parts of China for the previous policy of cooperation with the KMT. Ch'en and his supporters opposed that, as they had been against the earlier policy.²⁸

The Formation of the Left Opposition

The adherents of the Stalinist line of the Comintern were clearly in control of the Chinese Communist Party after the August 1927 Plenum. Nevertheless, Ch'en, P'eng and their supporters continued for some time to carry on their opposition to the policies dictated to the Chinese party by the Communist International, although without doing so in terms of the wider factional struggle within the CI.

Harold Isaacs has noted that in the period after his removal from the CCP leadership Ch'en Tu-hsiu "wrote several letters to the Central Committee opposing the policy of staging futile and costly uprisings. In August 1929 he addressed a letter to the Central Committee expressing his opposition to the party's course and demanding a reexamination of its policies. . . ."²⁹

When the Comintern leadership learned of the oppositionist attitude of Ch'en and P'eng they sent an invitation to the two Chinese to attend the Sixth World Congress of the International which was scheduled to meet in Moscow within a few months. Although Ch'en was first inclined to accept the invitation, he finally agreed with P'eng's argument that their only alternatives if they were to go to Moscow would be to "confess their error" and thus be assured a continuing role in the CCP, or to state frankly their opposition to Comintern policy in China, which would almost certainly result in their not being allowed to return home. Both men

turned down the invitation to the Sixth Congress.³⁰ Harold Isaacs has noted that Ch'en Tu-hsiu turned down still another invitation to go to Moscow in 1930.³¹

In the spring of 1929 two of the Chinese students returning from Moscow brought with them two documents of Trotsky, "Summary and Perspective of the Chinese Revolution" and "The Chinese Question After the Sixth World Congress," which they presented to P'eng Shu-tse.³² P'eng immediately came to the conclusion that he agreed with Trotsky's analysis of the errors of the Stalinist Comintern.

P'eng showed the documents to Ch'en Tu-hsiu who also agreed with them. As a consequence the two men decided to organize a Left Opposition within the Chinese Communist Party. They quickly gained a wide range of adherents. P'eng later wrote that "we recruited a group of workers and cadres who were responsible for political work in the proletarian movement. Thus, our opposition faction consisted of party leadership and major cadres from different parts of the country."³³

For several months after the formation of the Left Opposition there was a bitter factional conflict within the party. In September 1929 a so-called "Communist Party Joint Conference" was held, before which P'eng was called to defend his position. P'eng spoke three times during this meeting. He denounced the attempt by the dominant group in the party to blame Ch'en and his allies for the "opportunism" of the party in its relations with the Kuomintang, arguing that all of those who had supported the Comintern's policy should admit their share of responsibility for what had happened. He also demanded that there be freedom within the party for members to discuss the positions of Ch'en and other leaders of the party who disagreed with the dominant group.

The Stalinist group accused the Trotskyists of "illegal" factional activity. They denounced the Left Opposition rather than arguing with the points which it raised. On

November 15, 1929, Ch'en, P'eng, Wang Zekal, Ma Yufu and Cai Zhenda were expelled from the party, accused of "Trotskyism," as well as of "factionalism and anti-party, anti-international activities."³⁴ In all about one hundred members were expelled from the party at this time.³⁵

The Proliferation of Chinese Trotskyist Groups

When an independent Trotskyist movement was finally organized in China it did not emerge as a single united organization. For several years there were four different groups claiming allegiance to Trotskyism. Although these were ultimately united, the differences among the various Trotskyist leaders in the early period of the movement were to be an element in further splits which occurred in later years.

The first avowedly Trotskyist organization to be established in China was the "Our Words" group, named after a periodical it began to put out. Our Words was established by a group of students returning in 1928 from the Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow. It was a very small group, reportedly having only nine members when it was formally organized in January 1929. Soon afterward two of these, Ou Fang and Chen Yimou, settled in Hong Kong where they began to acquire a modicum of influence among the dock workers. They also had groups in Shanghai and Peking. Even so, they probably never achieved a membership of more than thirty. From the beginning Our Words was established outside the Chinese Communist Party.³⁶

The second Trotskyist organization was that set up by Ch'en Tu-hsiu, P'eng Shu-tse and their associates upon being expelled from the Communist Party. It was generally known as the Proletarian faction, after the name of a periodical it began to publish in March 1930.³⁷

Almost immediately upon their expulsion from the CCP, Ch'en issued an "Appeal

to All the Comrades of the Chinese Communist Party." It argued that the "opportunist" policy which the Comintern had retroactively accused the CCP of following under Ch'en's leadership had been principally the responsibility of the Comintern's leadership, headed by Stalin and Bukharin. It ended by demanding "a return to the spirit and political line of Bolshevism," and urged party members to "stand straightforward on the side of the International Opposition led by Comrade Trotsky, that is, under the banner of real Marxism and Leninism."³⁸

Five days after issuance of Ch'en's appeal a statement entitled "Our Political Views" was issued over the signatures of eighty-one members (or recent ex-members) of the Communist Party. Twenty-eight of the signatories were workers, ten were former students in Moscow, and the rest were local party officials. This document, which was the first programmatic statement of Chinese Trotskyism, was divided into five sections.

The document dealt with the evolution of Stalinist control in the Comintern and traced the errors of the Chinese party's policy to that control. It condemned both the opportunism of the policy of continued collaboration with the Kuomintang between 1923 and 1927 and the "adventurist" subsequent attempt to organize insurrections in various cities. It endorsed the positions Trotsky had taken on these issues, saying that "if only we had had the benefit of Comrade Trotsky's political leadership before 1927, then we might have been able to lead the Chinese revolution to victory. Even if we were defeated, there would not have been such political confusion and organizational destruction. . . ."³⁹

After giving Trotsky's analysis of the rise of bureaucratization of the Soviet Union, the document set forth "Our Attitudes and Proposals." It summed these up by saying that "In order to support a true proletarian line and realize Bolshevik-Leninist unity, the Opposition has no choice but to carry

out an organized and resolute struggle with the present opportunist leadership."⁴⁰

The Proletarian group was undoubtedly the most important of the original Chinese Trotskyist factions both in terms of the status of its leadership and the number of members and cadres it attracted from the Communist Party. It has been estimated that by 1931 the group had about five hundred members.⁴¹

The third faction was that known as the October Society. It was led by Liu Renjing, a founder of the Communist Party, and Wang Fanxi (real name, Wang Wenyuan), who had belonged to the party since 1925. Liu had returned from the Lenin Institute in Moscow in the summer of 1929 after having stopped over for interviews with Alfred Rosmer in Paris and with Trotsky in Turkey. Trotsky sent back with him a document entitled "The Political Situation in China and the Tasks of the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition," which Liu gave to P'eng Shu-tse in September 1929.

After discussions with P'eng and others Liu joined the Our Words group. However, in the summer of 1930, Liu and Wang Fanxi led a number of people, including some from Shanghai, in establishing a new faction. It published a short-lived journal, *October*.

The fourth Trotskyist faction was the Struggle Society, established in the summer of 1930 with seven members, including Chao Ji and Wang Pingui, the two Moscow ex-students who had first turned over the documents of Trotsky from the Sixth Comintern Congress to P'eng Shu-tse early in 1929. A third leader was Liu Yin. It probably never came to have more than thirty members.⁴²

The Communist League

Establishment and Early History of the Communist League

The various Chinese Trotskyist factions were in contact with Leon Trotsky. This

seems to have been particularly the case with the October Society and the Proletarian faction. The former apparently sought to turn Trotsky against Ch'en Tu-hsiu, but Trotsky, although recognizing the fact that Ch'en had in the beginning gone along with the CCP alliance with the Kuomintang, knew that he had sought an end to that alliance and had come around completely to Trotsky's own view of the policy of the Comintern in China.⁴³

The Chinese Trotskyists themselves recognized that their division into several competing factions weakened their overall influence, so by the summer of 1930 they were already negotiating the possibility of unity. They formed a Negotiating Council for Unification for this purpose. However, as Joseph Miller quoted Wang Fanxi as saying, "the negotiations took a very long time. Each group expressed different opinions at every meeting of the council."⁴⁴

Finally, on January 8, 1931, Trotsky addressed a letter entitled "To the Chinese Left Opposition," urging the various factions to unite. He said that "To begin with, I will say that in studying the new documents I finally became convinced that there is no difference in principle at all among the various groups that had entered on the road to unification. There are nuances in tactics, which in the future, depending on the course of events, could develop into differences. However, there are no grounds for assuming that these differences of opinion will necessarily coincide with the lines of the former groupings."

Trotsky ended this letter with an appeal to his Chinese supporters. He wrote: "*Dear friends, fuse your organizations and your press definitively, this very day! We must not drag out the preparations for the unification a long time, because in that way, without wanting to, we can create artificial differences.*"⁴⁵

Trotsky's appeal to his followers brought rather quick results. On May 1, 1931 the unification conference of the Chinese Trots-

kyists opened and the proceedings continued for three days. The meeting was attended by seventeen delegates and four observers claiming to represent 483 members in all. There were six representatives of Our Words, five of the Proletarian Faction, four from the October Group and two from the Militant Group.⁴⁶

The conference established the Communist League of China and adopted Trotsky's document "The Political Situation in China and the Task of the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition" as its "programmatic base." It also elected a Central Committee, with Ch'en Tu-hsiu as its secretary general. The other members of the Central Committee were P'eng Shu-tse, Wang Fanxi, Song Fengchun, Chen Yimou, Song Jingxiu, Zhang Jiu, Zheng Chaolin, Liu Hanyi, and Pu Yifan.⁴⁷

Although most of the Chinese Trotskyists were unified in the Communist League, some did not go along with this unification. Some of them seem to have dropped out of political activities, including Ma Yufu and Liu Yin (of the Struggle Society). Liang Ganqiao of the Our Words group sometime later joined the Kuomintang. Liu Renjing, although not joining the Communist League, continued to consider and proclaim himself a Trotskyist and was to play a subsequent role in the history of Chinese Trotskyism.⁴⁸

The membership of the Communist League was concentrated almost exclusively in the cities. There is no indication that the Chinese Trotskyists had any influence in, or even contact with, the Chinese Soviet Republic which scattered Stalinist guerrilla groups were trying to establish in various parts of southern China. E. H. Carr has noted that "Trotsky ridiculed the idea that 'Chinese peasants, without the participation of the industrial centres and without the leadership of the communist party, had created a Soviet government.'⁴⁹

About three weeks after the establishment of the Communist League officials in Shanghai cracked down on the new Trotskyist organization. Two-thirds of the members

of its Central Committee were arrested. P'eng, Ch'en, and Song Jingxiu were the only Central Committee members still out of jail, and they had to remain deeply in the underground. This persecution frightened off some of the members of the organization.⁵⁰

National events soon changed Chinese politics and the situation of the Trotskyists, however. On September 18, 1931, the Japanese launched their campaign to take over the Chinese province of Manchuria, and they followed this in January 1932 by a military attack on Shanghai.

Soon after these events the Trotskyists began publishing an apparently clandestine periodical, *Spark*. It carried articles by Chinese Trotskyist leaders and publications of Trotsky himself. *Spark* urged that the Communist parties force the USSR and the international Communist movement to support China in its struggle against the Japanese. In Chinese internal politics *Spark* urged mobilization of the urban workers and linkage of the CCP's rural soviets with the urban labor movement. It also urged the unification of the Chinese Communist ranks. Joseph Miller has noted that "this was the basic program for the anti-Japanese resistance promulgated by the Communist League, and they took this program into the schools and the factories, where they agitated to develop a broad-based democratic movement."⁵¹

The Communist League also began publishing an "open" periodical, *Warm Tide*, which was said to have "gained wide influence among general readers, including members of the Chinese Communist Party." This influence was the result of increasing disillusionment of CCP members with the policies of the party's Stalinist leadership.⁵² The Trotskyists also began issuing a magazine, *The Moving Force*, designed particularly to appeal to intellectuals and students. In addition, they put out Chinese translations of works of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, including parts of Trotsky's autobiography.⁵³

The position of the Communist League in the face of Japanese aggression got a favorable response among workers and intellectuals. Ch'en Pi-lan has written that "our agitation and propaganda work had great influence among the students and working masses, and we met with an especially broad response among the lower levels of the party cadres."⁵⁴ Ch'en Pi-lan added that "many rank-and-file cadres who read the documents of Trotsky and the anti-Japanese articles and criticisms of Stalin's policies published in *Warm Tide* got in touch with us. After discussing with P'eng Shu-tse, they joined the Trotskyist movement. Several dozen important industrial party cells came over to us, including the postal, power-plant and textile workers. These cells totaled half the membership of the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai. The Left Opposition was thus able to lead the workers movement in Shanghai in several important strikes that met with relative success. The Trotskyist movement simultaneously made fresh headway in Peking, Wuhan, Nanking, Kwangtung, and Hong Kong."⁵⁵

Persecution of the Communist League

But this period of success of the Communist League was to be short-lived. Joseph Miller has pointed out that the Trotskyists, who were operating semiclandestinely in Shanghai and other major cities (in contrast to the Stalinist cadres who had largely joined their rural guerrilla forces), were particularly vulnerable to the persecution of the Chiang Kai-shek regime.

On October 15, 1932, Kuomintang government police raided a meeting of the Central Committee of the League, arresting P'eng Shu-tse, who was presiding, and the four others in attendance. A few hours later, Ch'en Tu-hsiu was also arrested. On the days that followed most leading cadres of the group in Shanghai, as well as many in other cities, were arrested and jailed by the Nationalist government authorities.⁵⁶

Most of the Trotskyist leaders who had been picked up were taken to Nanking, the Nationalist capital. The press kept track of what was happening to them and a number of leading intellectuals demanded that the League leaders be given a public trial in a civil court rather than being subject to an "in camera" military tribunal, which might well condemn them to death before the public could be made aware. As a consequence of this campaign the trial of Ch'en, P'eng and others began in Nanking on April 14, 1933.

The Trotskyists were accused of "(1) dissemination of seditious propaganda, and (2) formation of organizations having for their object the endangering of the Republic. . . ." After a trial lasting a week Ch'en and P'eng were sentenced to thirteen years in jail and fifteen years deprivation of civil rights. A higher court later changed the sentence to eight years' imprisonment. They were actually to remain in jail until the Japanese attack on Nanking.⁵⁷

In spite of the elimination of the top Trotskyist leaders by the Nationalist government, the Communist League continued to maintain some activity. *Spark* continued to appear and several pamphlets also were published between 1932 and 1934. Apparently the principal organizer of this Trotskyist activity was Chen Qichang, who operated in Shanghai.⁵⁸ In 1934 he was joined by Wang Fanxi, arrested in October 1932 but released in an amnesty late in 1934.⁵⁹

A number of new people joined the Trotskyist ranks during this period, particularly in Shanghai. Two foreigners were of particular importance. One was Frank Glass, a South African, already a Trotskyist who came to China as a journalist. He was largely responsible for financing the Trotskyist publications, contributing about \$100 a month out of his salary of \$400.

The other important foreigner was Harold Isaacs, an American journalist, who in 1932 had established close contacts with the Communist Party and began to publish an English-language periodical, *China Forum*,

which served for some time as a mouthpiece for the CCP. By late 1933 or early 1934 Isaacs had become disillusioned with the Stalinists and attracted to the Trotskyists, perhaps through the person of Frank Glass. In any case, he decided to close down *China Forum* and to turn over its printing establishment to the Trotskyists. Isaacs moved to Peking to work on his book *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, taking Trotskyist Liu Renjing with him as his research assistant and translator.⁶⁰

For some time Liu Renjing, who had had a long-standing personal and political feud with Ch'en Tu-hsiu, was able to gain control of the Trotskyist leadership and to use it to attack his old adversary. He had recruited a number of new people at the University of Peking and early in 1935 was able, with their help, to establish a new Provisional Central Committee. That body promptly condemned the alleged "opportunism" of Ch'en, and called upon him to "recognize his errors."

However, Trotsky soon intervened in the situation. When he was visited in Norway by Harold Isaacs, who came to consult Trotsky about his book on the Chinese revolution, Trotsky expressed to Isaacs his support for Ch'en, and in fact won Isaacs over to his point of view.

Apparently, Isaacs passed this word back to Frank Glass who took the lead in bringing together the supporters of Ch'en and those of Liu Renjing, who in the meanwhile had been jailed by the KMT police along with most of the other Provisional Central Committee members. The result was that still another Provisional Central Committee was established in Shanghai at the end of 1936 consisting of members of both groups. Its authority was formally recognized by Ch'en Tu-hsiu, who still remained in prison.⁶¹

By early 1936 the Communist League had begun to publish another journal, *Struggle*, which by the end of the year had a circulation of two or three hundred. The League had also once again acquired local groups

in Peking, Kwangsi, Chekiang and in Hong Kong, where it began to publish a journal, *Star*.

This renewed activity brought renewed persecution. In May 1937 Wang Fanxi was arrested once again and was kept in prison in Nanking until shortly before the Japanese took that city in November 1937. Frank Glass's home was also carefully watched and people who visited him were arrested from time to time.⁶²

Splits in the Trotskyist Ranks

Ch'en Tu-hsiu and P'eng Shu-tse were released from jail in Nanking in August 1937 after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. By that time they had developed basic disagreements. As Joseph Miller has noted, "Ch'en had developed fundamental differences with some of the tenets of Trotskyism concerning the nature of the Soviet Union, the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and democracy. He and P'eng had exchanged views on these issues while in prison, with P'eng maintaining what might be termed an 'orthodox' Trotskyist position."⁶³

Subsequent to their release from prison Ch'en went to Wuhan. When he was visited there in November by Wang Fanxi he suggested that the Trotskyists not try to revive their organization but rather work with the "third party," a group of small political organizations which were barely tolerated by the Kuomintang regime but were opposed to both the Nationalists and the Communists.⁶⁴

P'eng, on the other hand, returned to Shanghai where according to his wife, Ch'en Pi-lan, there were only about a dozen Trotskyists left. She noted that "to begin swimming in the current of the anti-imperialist struggle, P'eng called a provisional conference of all the remaining comrades, including those newly released from prison. A resolution was passed at the conference supporting the armed struggle being waged

by the Kuomintang government against Japanese imperialism, accompanying this was a criticism from the political point of view of the government's reactionary policies."

Ch'en Pi-lan added that "a provisional central committee was elected and authorization given to publish a clandestine party journal, *The Struggle*. Shortly after this meeting a number of small regional groups were again established. Owing to the favorable objective situation, the Trotskyist organization was soon expanding in areas such as Shanghai, Peking, Canton, Hong Kong, and the provinces of Kwangsi and Chekiang."⁶⁵

In August 1939 the Trotskyists were able to get out an open periodical, *Moving Onward*, of which Ch'en Pi-lan said that "its influence was quite considerable. The periodical carried criticisms of the Kuomintang's passivity in the War of Resistance and of Stalin's signing the infamous German-Soviet pact." She noted too that they were able to translate and publish Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* as well as his pamphlet *The Moscow Trials*, and some pamphlets by P'eng.⁶⁶

However, shortly before the conversion of the Sino-Japanese War into the Pacific War as a consequence of the attack on Pearl Harbor there was a serious split in the Chinese Trotskyist movement. The question at issue was the attitude to be adopted toward the war, and three positions emerged in this controversy.

Ch'en Pi-lan has explained that "one tendency, headed by Ch'en Tu-hsiu, viewed the war as a struggle between democratic countries and the fascist Axis. He therefore argued for abandoning the policy of 'defeatism' in democratic countries like England and France. In addition, in view of the tragedy of the Moscow trials and the Hitler-Stalin pact, he reached the conclusion that the Soviet Union was no longer a workers' state and consequently should not be supported."⁶⁷

Virtually exactly opposite of Ch'en's posi-

tion was that of Wang Fanxi and Chang Ch'ao-lin. Although favoring the struggle against the Japanese invaders (while continuing political opposition to the Kuomintang regime) as long as it continued to be merely a Sino-Japanese conflict, they maintained that the situation would be different if that war became part of a wider struggle.

Wang argued that "if the American Army intervened in the war and became the main opponent of Japanese imperialism, then the war would change its character and become a war between Japan and the United States, with China as a junior partner on the American side." Therefore he claimed, "if we really meant to continue our revolutionary struggle during the war, not in words but in deeds, we should prepare ourselves to adopt . . . a position of 'revolutionary defeatism. . . .'"⁶⁸

The third faction was headed by P'eng Shu-tse. He based his argument against both "Ch'en's opportunism and Wang's ultraleft sectarianism"⁶⁹ on a letter which Trotsky had written to the Mexican Trotskyist Diego Rivera on September 23, 1937, soon after the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War. Trotsky had written that "the duty of all the workers' organizations of China was to participate actively and in the front lines of the present war against Japan, without abandoning, for a single moment, their own program and independent activity. . . . China is a semi-colonial country which Japan is transforming, under our very eyes, into a colonial country. Japan's struggle is imperialist and reactionary. China's struggle is emancipatory and progressive."

Trotsky had added that "Japan and China are not in the same historical plane. The victory of Japan will signify the enslavement of China, the end of her economic and social development, and the terrible strengthening of Japanese imperialism. The victory of China will signify, on the contrary, the social revolution in Japan and the free development, that is to say unhindered by external oppression, of the class struggle in China."⁷⁰

P'eng's wife has noted that "P'eng defended Trotsky's fundamental position on the Second World War and the Sino-Japanese War, including the possibility of war breaking out between Japan and the U.S."⁷¹

This factional struggle came to a head at the Second National Convention of the Communist League in July 1941. The political resolution adopted there, entitled "Our Attitudes and Policies Toward the German-Soviet War and Coming United States-Japanese War," reflected the position of the P'eng group. The resolution claimed that "all advanced capitalist countries and backward countries, including the Soviet Union will become embroiled in the imminent imperialist war. . . . The destinies of China's anti-Japanese war and the Soviet Union's anti-German war have now been tied together." It argued against "defeatism."

Joseph Miller has summed up other portions of this resolution: "the League demanded the 'complete freedom' to speak, publish, associate, lead strikes, take up arms to fight Japan, and promote their political program among the members of all parties, except for those of traitors. They also demanded the institution of an eight-hour work day, the establishment of peasant associations in the villages, and the confiscation of land. Concerning their relationship to the CCP, the League recognized that it must continue to criticize the party politically, but as far as the anti-Japanese war and the defense of the Soviet Union were concerned, it was necessary to cooperate in actual activities. The resolution also contained points concerning the organization of guerrilla units, agitation among the Japanese soldiers. . . ."⁷²

Ch'en Pi-lan noted that "P'eng's resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority. No one supported Ch'en's position, and Wang's was backed by only a few members."⁷³

Ch'en Tu-hsiu seems to have withdrawn from all further participation in the Trotskyist movement after this Second Convention.

He died on May 27, 1942.⁷⁴ The faction led by Wang Fanxi and Cheng Ch'ao-lin first tried to continue the controversy within the Communist League, then began its own periodical *Internationalist*, and finally established their own organization, the Communist League of China (Internationalists).⁷⁵

From Communist League to Revolutionary Communist Party

Right after the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor Japanese troops occupied the International Settlement area of Shanghai, where the Trotskyists had had their headquarters. A number of leading elements in the Communist League were arrested by the Japanese, although P'eng Shu-tse was not among them, and contact between the League headquarters and local groups was broken. For practical purposes the Communist League as a functioning organization did not exist from December 1941 until the defeat of the Japanese.

Ch'en Pi-lan has described the difficulties the Trotskyists faced in this period: "Despite the perilous situation, P'eng managed to bring together a group of young comrades. Using a pseudonym he gained an appointment as a professor of Chinese history, Western history and philosophy in two universities. In his classes, of course, he could not use Marxist terminology. Nevertheless, he oriented his lectures along Marxist lines and influenced a number of leftist students. Some of them wanted to meet him after his lectures and thus we welcomed a group of young people to our home, regardless of their political backgrounds."

She went on: "We discussed various problems with these students, later converting even those who had come under Stalinist influence to our positions. These youths were to become the foundation of our movement in the postwar period."⁷⁶

With the surrender of the Japanese and the return of most Chinese cities to the control of the Chiang Kai-shek government the Na-

tionalists substantially reduced the degree of political oppression, allowing more freedom of organization and expression than in the past. Ch'en Pi-lan has noted that "taking advantage of the opening, our organization once more moved actively forward."

The Communist League began publishing two magazines, *Seeking the Truth*, edited by P'eng Shu-tse, which Ch'en Pi-lan has said "was the most attractive magazine in the postwar period," adding that it was "openly propagating Trotskyist ideas." The other publication was edited by Ch'en Pi-lan and was first called *Young and Women*, but was then changed to *New Voice*. It became the official organ of the League.

Ch'en Pi-lan has claimed that "the two periodicals had a nationwide circulation, reaching all the important cities until they ceased publication at the end of 1948 upon our leaving Shanghai. Their influence was considerable among the intellectuals, students and young workers. In addition they made it possible for branches of our movement, disrupted by the war, to renew contacts and to reach out to individuals who had become isolated."

Branches of the League were reestablished in Shanghai, Canton, Hong Kong "and other cities," and P'eng held a weekly seminar in Shanghai which was attended regularly by over one hundred people. The League also conducted "regular cadre schools." By the time of its Third National Convention in August 1948 the League claimed 350 members.⁷⁷

The Third National Convention of the Communist League adopted a new political program. It also adopted a new name for the organization, the Chinese Revolutionary Communist Party, and approved a new party constitution and "a resolution on organizational principles."⁷⁸

The rebirth and modest growth of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) took place against the background of the civil war between the Chiang Kai-shek government and the Communist Party forces, which had

been raging intermittently since the end of World War II. Soon after the Third National Convention of the RCP took place, the Communists launched what proved to be their final offensive against the Kuomintang.

During the civil war the Trotskyists took the position that "both the KMT and the CCP should unconditionally stop the war." Many years later, this slogan was criticized in retrospect by the Chinese Trotskyists, because it "objectively equated the KMT and the CCP" which was "a tactical mistake."⁷⁹

Before the launching of the last Communist offensive, while the Communists and Kuomintang were still engaged in negotiations about the possibility of forming a coalition regime, the Trotskyists issued an appeal to the workers and peasants about the situation:

The outstanding feature of the present situation is that while the peasant armies are scoring unprecedented victories and while the bourgeois regime is engulfed by unprecedented bankruptcy, the Chinese working class is lacking a powerful party armed with the correct program and able to provide the workers with revolutionary leadership.

To the Chinese working class, we Trotskyists point out that in the absence of a powerful proletarian party the peasant army has fallen into the hands of conciliators. It is being used by the top bureaucracy of the Stalinist party as a means of striking a bargain with the bourgeoisie in the establishment of a "coalition government." Once it begins playing the role of guardian of a "coalition government," the peasant army will of necessity be used by the bourgeoisie and by the conciliators as a weapon against the workers.

The RCP put forward the "correct" positions to be maintained by workers in both Kuomintang and Communist-controlled areas. In the former, "we must expose the Kuomintang's entire policy of oppression and its 'peace maneuver' . . . Our slogans must espe-

cially emphasize demands for the release of all political prisoners, for the abrogation of all 'emergency' and martial laws. . . ." It concluded that "In this area our general slogan is 'Down with the Kuomintang government: For a National Assembly chosen by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage!'"

The RCP maintained that "we must pay particular attention to systematic agitation and propaganda in the Stalinist-controlled area. Above all, we must point out to the masses that the so-called 'people's government' under the auspices of the Stalinist party is in essence a military bureaucratic dictatorship propped up with guns. In the final analysis the power of the Communist Party bears a bourgeois character, basing itself primarily on the petty-bourgeois peasantry. Power of this kind is quite unstable."

Finally, the RCP admitted that "we Trotskyists understand that in the first stage of the Stalinist dictatorship we will be isolated temporarily from the broad masses. What is more, we know that we are threatened with physical annihilation."⁸⁰

It was in view of their likely treatment by the triumphant Stalinists that the RCP Executive Committee held an emergency meeting in December 1948, as the Communist armies were approaching the Yangtze River area of central China. At that meeting it was decided that the Political Bureau of the party would be transferred to Hong Kong, that a Provisional Committee in Shanghai would attempt to maintain contact with party groups in various parts of the country, and that members of the RCP would try whenever possible to enter the CCP and its Communist Youth League and the "mass organizations" established under Stalinist aegis, "in order to better support all progressive measures undertaken by the CCP."

Ch'en Pi-lan has noted that "of the five comrades on the Political Bureau, Chin was already in Hong Kong, I K'uan, who was not willing to leave Shanghai, was soon arrested

by the CCP regime along with many other comrades none of whom have been heard from since; P'eng Shu-tse, Liu Chia-Liang and I set out for Hong Kong, where we arrived at the end of 1948."⁸¹

During the first few years of the Communist regime the Chinese Trotskyists led a highly precarious existence before being completely obliterated as an organized group. As early as August 1949 according to an appeal by underground Trotskyists in January 1953, "most members of the Kiangsu-Chekiang Emergency Committee of our Party and several other responsible comrades were arrested, but were later instructed to cease political activity and released." At about the same time, Trotskyists were arrested on a large scale in Wenchow (Chekiang Province) and Shunsan (Kwangtung Province). "Some were shot on the false charge of being 'Kuomintang agents.'" In 1950 there was a further roundup of Trotskyists in Kwangsi Province. The appeal noted that "the fate of dozens of arrested comrades is not yet known to this day."

Then, "from December 1952 to January 1953, wholesale arrests of Trotskyists were staged throughout the country, from Peking to Canton, and from Shanghai to Chungking. . . . Such a simultaneous action on a national scale clearly indicates that it was by no means a 'local incident,' but a planned action conducted directly by the supreme authority of the CP."⁸²

From Communist League (Internationalists) to Internationalist Workers Party

The dissident Trotskyists, led by Wang Fanxi and Cheng Chiao-lin, continued to function after 1941 as a separate organization from the Communist League. They used the name Communist League (Internationalists). Once the war was over they entered into at least epistolary contact with

the Fourth International and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

The Wang-Cheng group continued to maintain the position which had brought them to split from the CI. Thus, in suggesting to the Fourth International the position which it ought to adopt with regard to "anti-imperialist wars," the Communist League (Internationalists) wrote that "if the war were carried on as a war between a colonial country on the one side, and an imperialist power on the other, then it is progressive; but if the war were, or finally became interlocked with, a war between two imperialist powers . . . then it has lost the progressive meaning which it had originally."⁸³

The Communist League (Internationalists) continued to be highly critical of the rival Chinese Trotskyists. Thus, in a "discussion document" issued in November 1947 they wrote that "our tactical divergences at the present stage are centered on the question of the civil war now being waged between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Stalinists." It claimed that the P'eng group "in reality . . . took the side of the Kuomintang."

The Communist League (Internationalists) document continued, "We reject and oppose this bankrupt position of theirs. We maintain that the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party represent different class forces in Chinese society. The former represents the landlords and bourgeoisie, while the latter represents mainly the poor peasants. . . . As a peasant war, the civil war has a progressive character on the side of the peasants; but, as a peasant war only, the civil war is devoid of any perspective, and is even doomed to failure, because of its Stalinist domination."⁸⁴

In the immediate post-World War II period the dissident Trotskyists, like their rivals, were able to establish organizations in various parts of the country, including Shanghai, Peking, Kwangsi, and Hangchow. In April 1949, only a few weeks before the Communists captured Shanghai, the group

held a convention in which they changed their name to Internationalist Workers Party.

It was decided that Wang Fanxi and one other member of the leadership of the new party should go to Hong Kong in view of the proximity of Stalinist capture of Shanghai. For at least a while other members of the group continued to be clandestinely active even after the Stalinist victory. They established a new underground journal, *Marxist Youth*, which flourished modestly for a while.⁸⁵

One of those who stayed behind in Shanghai was Cheng Ch'ao-lin, who had shared top leadership in the Internationalist Workers Party with Wang. There were at least some overtures made to him by onetime friends in high posts in the Stalinist regime to get him to give up his Trotskyist allegiance, but these failed. Finally, on December 22, 1952, at the time of the general roundup of Trotskyists throughout the country, Cheng and his wife Wu Ching-ju were arrested. Cheng was kept in jail until after the death of Mao Tse-tung, being released only on June 5, 1979. His wife, who had been freed in 1947 but had rejoined her husband in a prison camp fifteen years later, was also released with him.⁸⁶

The Internationalist Workers Party was dissolved "in the 1950s."⁸⁷

Chinese Trotskyism in Exile

With the triumph of the Stalinists in China the Chinese Trotskyist movement existed principally in exile. P'eng Shu-tse and Ch'en Pi-lan, when they moved to Hong Kong late in 1948, established the RCP's publication there. They also brought out in Chinese Harold Isaac's *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*. However, as a consequence of Communist victory in China in 1948-49 the British authorities in Hong Kong, anxious to maintain good relations with the forces which dominated China, began to persecute the Trotskyists.

About a dozen of the refugee Chinese Trotskyists were arrested and deported by the Hong Kong authorities. The police also began to search for P'eng and Ch'en who, to evade capture, kept changing their residence. Finally, as a consequence of this persecution, they and a fellow Political Bureau member, Liu Chia-liang, fled to Vietnam.

The Chinese Trotskyist leaders were not safe in Vietnam either. A few months after arriving there a group of Vietnamese Trotskyists, accompanied by Liu Chia-liang, accepted an invitation to a "conference" in a part of the country controlled by the Stalinist Vietminh. There they were arrested, and Liu Chia-liang died shortly after in a Vietminh jail. Since they felt that Liu's fate would soon be theirs as well, P'eng Shu-tse and Ch'en Pi-lan fled once more, this time to Paris.⁸⁸

In 1952 the handful of Chinese Trotskyists still left in Hong Kong established a Provisional National Committee (PNC) to take the place of the party's elected Central Committee. The only surviving members of that Central Committee, P'eng and Ch'en, by then resident in France, recognized the PNC as the legitimate directing body of the Revolutionary Communist Party in 1954.⁸⁹

Joseph Miller has noted that "activities in Hong Kong were minimal; an irregular journal . . . was published, along with pamphlets discussing major events in China and the world. Since the major trade unions in Hong Kong and Kowloon were under Maoist control, there was little, if any, activity by the Trotskyists in this arena. Basically this was a period of retrenchment, a period of holding actions, which might allow the remnants of the movement to take advantage of any change in conditions."⁹⁰

In spite of the obliteration of the Trotskyist movement inside China, and the extremely limited membership and activity of the group in Hong Kong, P'eng Shu-tse and Ch'en Pi-lan continued not only to be very active Trotskyists but also influential figures in the world Trotskyist movement. Jo-

seph Miller has noted that as soon as they arrived in Paris in mid-1951 they "began full participation in the work of the Fourth International."⁹¹

P'eng almost immediately came into conflict with the European Trotskyists, led by Michel Pablo, who at that time dominated the International. He strongly disagreed with Pablo's move in suspending the majority of the members of the Central Committee of the French Section. At about the same time Pablo refused to circulate a criticism by P'eng of a draft resolution on China which the International Secretariat had sent out for discussion. Meanwhile, because of P'eng's position on these and other issues, Pablo prevented P'eng from participating in the work of the International Secretariat of which he was presumably a member.

Early in 1953 P'eng received an appeal from five Chinese Trotskyists who had succeeded in avoiding arrest for aid and publicity about the mass arrests of Trotskyists carried out by the Maoist regime in December 1952 and January 1953. P'eng asked Pablo to publish this and although (according to P'eng) "apparently Pablo consented to his request, in practice he put this appeal away in his office drawer. The only reason was that he was afraid that once this appeal was published his propaganda idealizing the Mao regime would be frustrated and his lies accusing the Chinese Trotskyists of 'refusing to go among the masses and being sectarian' would also be exposed."⁹²

As a consequence of these disagreements, when the International Committee of the Fourth International was set up under the aegis of the Socialist Workers Party of the U.S., P'eng and the Chinese Revolutionary Communist Party became part of it. A statement issued in January 1954 in the name of the National Central Committee of the RCP said that Pablo and his supporters "evidently abandoned the fundamental position of orthodox Trotskyism. . . . This revisionist deviation has become more clearly revealed when applied to all important problems."⁹³

In subsequent years P'eng became one of the principal people in the International Committee seeking to bring the two factions of world Trotskyism back together again. He was the principal proponent within the IC of the "First Parity Commission" which functioned in 1954-55.⁹⁴

From time to time P'eng acted as his party's spokesman with regard to events within China itself. He strongly opposed the Great Leap Forward started in 1958 and "criticized some members of the Fourth International for what he felt were naive views toward the commune movement."⁹⁵

P'eng and the RCP also strongly denounced the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. A resolution of the Provisional National Committee of the RCP on February 28, 1967, argued that "Mao's purpose is to reestablish his personal dictatorship and to cut short any reform measures," and argued in favor of "critical support" for the opponents of Mao, headed by Liu Shao-chi and Deng Tsiao-ping, because Mao's victory "will block all reformist roads, revive adventurism, and intensify the frenzied cult of the personality and personal dictatorship." This position was in contrast to the "neutral" stance taken by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International toward the Cultural Revolution.⁹⁶

Liz Cheung has noted the participation of the Chinese Trotskyists in the controversy in the United Secretariat in the 1970s. She has said that "after 1970, when there was a polemic in the FI on the Latin American guerrilla warfare strategy, the RCP stood against the strategy and was in the LTT"⁹⁷ (Leninist Trotskyist Tendency).

Joseph Miller has summed up the role of P'eng Shu-tse and Ch'en Pi-lan in the 1950s and 1960s thus: "It is clear . . . that P'eng's involvement at the center of the Trotskyist movement has meant a continued visibility for the Chinese perspective. In the years under consideration . . . the role played by P'eng and his wife . . . within the Fourth International has been substantial. . . . Cer-

tainly, in a period when the Trotskyists in Xiahgang [Hong Kong] were at their lowest ebb, these activities at the center by two of the earliest members of the CCP and the Chinese Left Opposition were crucial to the maintenance of the RCP."⁹⁸

P'eng was a member of the International Executive Committee and Secretariat of the United Secretariat from 1963 until 1979 when, because of his age, he was designated a "consultative member" of the IEC. He died in 1983.⁹⁹

Trotskyist Revival in Hong Kong

The resurgence of an open and rather dynamic, albeit small Trotskyist movement at least on the periphery of China, in Hong Kong, was the result of the student movement of the 1960s, which was so important also in the history of Trotskyism in the United States, France, Australia and several other countries. Liz Cheung of *October Review* has noted some of the specifically Chinese factors which contributed to the revival of Trotskyism in Hong Kong: "The change came after 1970 with the discrediting of the CCP due to the Cultural Revolution and the Lin Biao Incident, and the gradual rise of social movement in Hong Kong."¹⁰⁰

After student demonstrations in 1969 a group of youths in Hong Kong established early in 1970 a periodical, *Seventies Biweekly*, which "represented a radical tendency within the over-all youth movement."¹⁰¹ Trotskyism was only one of the radical ideologies in which those associated with the *Seventies Biweekly* were interested. However, some of the older Trotskyites, most notably Wang Fanxi, established contact with them, and he even contributed articles to the magazine.

It wasn't until 1972, when a few of the Hong Kong youths made an extensive trip to France, that a definite Trotskyist tendency began to develop within the new radical youth movement of Hong Kong. Those

young people looked up P'eng Shao-tse and had long conversations with him, and he was able to recruit a few of them to the movement, which they joined upon their return to Hong Kong.¹⁰²

The RCP at first did not favor its new recruits abandoning the *Seventies Biweekly* group. However, in May 1973 two of the returnees did so and established a Trotskyist youth group, the Revolutionary Internationalist League. This organization in 1974 took the name Socialist League, and in 1975 changed its name once again, to Revolutionary Marxist League. It published a periodical, *Combat Bulletin*, and was led principally by Wu Zhongxian. It was aligned with the International Majority Tendency of the United Secretariat.¹⁰³

Liz Cheung has written about this group that "the Revolutionary Marxist League . . . was connected with the majority in the United Secretariat. Its leader, C. C. Wu, had been in the RCP for a short time and he later withdrew from the RCP and formed the RML and began recruiting new members. The two organizations remain separated up to today. Each has dozens of members and operates with H.K. as base."¹⁰⁴ Like the RCP, the RML was "part of the Fourth International"¹⁰⁵ [United Secretariat].

In September 1973 Li Huaiming led another group of young people in breaking away from the *Seventies Biweekly*, this time with the support of the Revolutionary Communist Party. They formed a group which called itself the International Young Socialist Alliance and changed its name in 1974 to Young Socialist Group. It published a periodical first called *Left Bank* and then renamed *New Thought*.

Meanwhile, the Revolutionary Communist Party had launched an "open" periodical, *October Review*. It also organized its own youth group, the Revolutionary Communist Youth, which worked largely through the Young Socialist Group. The youth group published a periodical called *Young Militants*.

October Review, which by the early 1980s was carrying several pages in English in each issue although the periodical was mainly written in Chinese, followed what might be called an orthodox *usec* line. It frequently carried articles by Ernest Mandel and other United Secretariat leaders, maintained the traditional position that the Soviet Union, the Peoples Republic of China and other Stalinist-controlled regimes were "workers states," and called for "political revolution" in them, particularly in China. It supported Polish Solidarity as the beginning of such a revolution. It was highly critical of the Chinese regime both in its Maoist and post-Maoist phases. The monthly periodical carried extensive news not only about China and Hong Kong but about movements and events in many parts of the world.

The Tienanmen Square "incident" in Peking on April 5, 1976, when a more or less spontaneous demonstration that took place in commemoration of Chou En-lai, who had recently died, was attacked by "security" forces of the government, provoked a united front "forum" in Hong Kong. This took place on May 16, and the participants included not only the pro-Trotskyist organizations of the colony but a variety of other radical groups as well. The only elements which did not participate were the Maoists.¹⁰⁶

As a consequence of the resurgence of Trotskyist activity in Hong Kong the Revolutionary Communist Party held its Fourth Convention in April 1977. It was attended by sixteen voting delegates as well as observers from the Revolutionary Communist League of Japan and the Socialist Workers Party of Australia.¹⁰⁷

This convention adopted a number of basic resolutions. Most important of these was the Political Resolution, which covered a wide range of issues. It condemned the Chinese Communist government's foreign policy, saying that "for more than twenty years, the fundamental principle behind China's foreign relations with imperialist and capitalist countries has always been that of

'peaceful coexistence.' Its relations with other workers' states has never been consistent; at different times there have been different evaluations and different attitudes. In all of this, China's foreign policy has violated the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and has departed from the revolutionary standpoint of proletarianism."

The resolution called for "a proletarian internationalist revolutionary policy." This involved "support and aid the revolutionary movements of all workers and laboring masses," "make public all diplomatic treaties and other documents," and that "all workers' states should, on a voluntary and equal basis, establish a Socialist Federation at the first step towards a World Socialist Federation."

The 1977 political resolution also adopted the orthodox Trotskyist position in analyzing the Chinese Stalinist regime. It argued that "China's bureaucratic caste has already become an indestructible social layer, holding tightly to political and economic power. . . . In order to remove this obstacle, a complete political revolution must be carried out, with the proletariat leading all the laboring masses in the overthrow of the CCP's bureaucratic regime and the establishment of a true proletarian democracy."

This "proletarian democracy" was defined in terms of "fundamental democratic rights of the worker-peasant masses." These were detailed as being "personal, speech, press, assembly and association, bearing of arms, strikes, demonstration, residence, migration, travel, education, choice of work, and creation."¹⁰⁸

Discussion of Trotskyism in Post-Maoist China

The death of Mao Tse-tung and subsequent arrest of "the Gang of Four," and the ascendancy of Deng Tsiao-ping, provoked an "opening" in the Chinese Stalinist regime. To some degree at least, the situation made possible an investigation and discussion of many ideas and theories which previously

had been completely taboo. Among these was Trotskyism.

Joseph Miller noted in 1982 that "regardless of the differences between the Trotskyists and the current leadership in China, an official internal discussion of Trotskyism has apparently been going on since 1979. This discussion seems to include academics who have special expertise in the question and access to pertinent documents, a few old recanted Trotskyists . . . and high-level party leaders. . . ."¹⁰⁹

The present author has encountered one small piece of evidence of this new curiosity about Trotskyism in post-Mao China. This is the fact that in the early 1980s there was legally published in China a translation of our study of Trotskyism in Latin America.¹¹⁰

Also perhaps reflecting a somewhat altered view of Trotskyism on the part of the CCP leadership in the post-Mao period was an assurance given to a delegation of the *Hong Kong Federation of Students* which visited Peking in July 1983 to learn about the Chinese Communists' plans for Hong Kong once the colony had reverted to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. According to the communique issued by the delegation upon its return the Communist officials had assured them that "the rightists, the Trotskyists and all religious personalities would be allowed to run in elections, and that "the Kuomintang, the Trotskyists and anyone with particular political background will not have their activities restricted" In Hong Kong after 1997, "if they do not engage in sabotage."¹¹¹

The ideas of Trotskyism apparently had some influence upon the opposition movement, the Chinese Democracy Movement (CDM), which arose after the death of Mao Tse-tung. Both the *October Review* of the RCP and *Combat Bulletin* of the dissident Trotskyist group in Hong Kong carried much information on the CDM and expressed support for it.¹¹²

Liz Cheung has commented with regard to this that "there are also some Trotskyist

publications in H. K. being circulated in China through unofficial channels. It is hard to say if the democracy movement was inspired by Trotskyism, but there are striking similarities between their analysis of the bureaucracy, proposition of multiparty system and democratization, etc., with Trotskyist ideas. However, it is still difficult to say if the movement has come to the conclusion of political revolution. As you may know already, the movement was suppressed in April 1981 and the main leaders arrested, though there are reportedly clandestine activities still going on."¹¹³

Another RCP leader, Lee Sze, has said that Wang Sizhe, leader of one of the three major tendencies within the Democracy Movement, "has said that he agrees with Leon Trotsky's views on the development of bureaucracy, although he does not agree with Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution."

Lee Sze was paraphrased as saying in an interview early in 1984 that "because many of the young Democracy Movement activists are the children of middle-ranking or high-ranking cadres in the Chinese Communist Party they had access to a wider range of theoretical works than others might. Because of their family connections they could even read some of Trotsky's works since the Chinese Communist Party has published books and articles about Trotsky and the Fourth International in recent years for internal reference by high-ranking party members."¹¹⁴

In defending the dissidents in the Peoples Republic the Chinese Trotskyists in Hong Kong defined their own positions and ideas. This was the case in an editorial in *October Review* of November 1979 in defense of Wei Jingsheng, a leader of the CDM who was being prosecuted by the Chinese government and who had challenged not only the Chinese regime but Marxism itself. The periodical had already published a number of Wei's writings.

The editorial in *October Review* said that Wei's conviction for "counter revolutionary propaganda" the month before indicated

that "the ccr-drafted Constitution is not only entirely useless, empty writing, but is also an irony of the autocratic dictatorship."

The editorial even defended the right of Wei Jingsheng to criticize Marxism and socialism. It argued that "if Marxism cannot withstand criticism and opposition, it only shows that it is not the truth. We are firmly convinced that Marxism and socialism represent the truth, and are absolutely unafraid of criticism and opposition by the people because it does not represent the truth, and it is extremely weak."¹¹⁵

Hong Kong Trotskyists and the Evolution of Post-Mao China

Understandably as the orientation of the People's Republic changed drastically following the death of Mao Tse-tung, the Hong Kong Trotskyists followed very closely and extensively commented on these developments. In an interview with two representatives of the *Intercontinental Press* early in 1984, Lee Sze of the rcp and Mr. Lueng of the RML both indicated their view of what was occurring.

Both men expressed reservations on the market orientation which underlay much of the policy of the Deng Tsaio-ping regime. Lueng summed up their preoccupations by saying that "although it is too early to tell, the convergence of capital accumulation by the peasants, the restoration of investment income to former capitalists, and the foreign investment and loans could be an impetus to capitalist influence in China."¹¹⁶

Both Hong Kong Trotskyists stressed that the relative freedom for dissidents to protest and organize between 1978 and 1981 was a function of Deng Tsaio-ping's efforts to get complete control of the Peking regime. They agreed that once he had gotten such control his administration cracked down substantially. However, Lee Sze observed that this repression was not as great as during the earlier period. He commented that "although the Chinese people and workers

have no officially recognized democratic rights and have no access to publications to publicize the exchange of their views, people in general are more open in expressing their views."¹¹⁷

Both Hong Kong Trotskyist groups were critical of the foreign policy of the regime under Deng Tsaio-ping. Both parties strongly opposed the Chinese invasion of Vietnam in 1979, seeing it as an effort to curry favor with the United States.¹¹⁸

When the agreement between China and Great Britain for the return of Hong Kong to Chinese control was announced late in 1984, the two Trotskyist groups in Hong Kong issued a joint statement on the accord. That document expressed regret that the Chinese had not insisted on immediate return of the colony to China, but rather had agreed to the transfer as of July 1, 1997, when the "leases" of the mainland part of the colony expired. The statement observed that "this is not only a recognition of the unequal treaty which leased the New Territories, but is also in practice recognition of the legality of British rule of Hong Kong based on the unequal treaties. This is a serious political mistake."

The Trotskyists ended their statement with two sets of "appeals," to "the people of China," and "to the Hong Kong people" respectively. The first of these sets was "A. Oppose all articles of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Annexes that violate the principle of sovereignty and that break the interests of the Chinese (including Hong Kong) people. B. Demand that the Chinese government assist the Hong Kong people to convene a generally elected, full-powered General Assembly, recover sovereignty as soon as possible, and practice democratic self-rule of the Hong Kong people. C. Compel the Chinese government to at once carry out radical democratic changes, abolish one-party dictatorship and bureaucratic privileges, practice socialist democracy and legal system, and return the government to the people."

The "appeals" to the people of Hong Kong were

A. Organize and take the initiative to convene a generally elected and full-powered Hong Kong General Assembly, end colonial rule, and democratically elect a self-rule government. B. Actively start the discussion on the drafting of a Basic Law, strive for the democratic enactment of the Basic Law by the Hong Kong people, and realize the democratic rule of Hong Kong by the Hong Kong people. C. Be closely concerned with the political, economic and social developments in China, join forces with the people in the mainland, and struggle together for the practice of socialist democracy in China.¹¹⁹

Conclusions About Chinese Trotskyism

Its position on the Chinese Revolution was one of the first things which differentiated International Trotskyism from Stalinism. Similarly, Chinese Trotskyism was one of the first national sections to be established. It was organized by some of the major founders of the Chinese Communist Party and at its inception was able to rally substantial support among the remnants of that party which survived the decimation of the CCP ranks by Chiang Kai-shek's regime in 1927-28.

Although decimated, the Trotskyist movement in China was able to survive the persecution of the Nationalist regime and even of the Japanese occupation forces between 1941-1945. It was completely obliterated by the Stalinist-Maoist government which came to power in 1949, surviving thereafter only in exile in Hong Kong and Paris.

This situation began to change only marginally after the Great Cultural Revolution, and particularly after the death of Mao. As P'eng Shu-tse has noted, China is the only Stalinist-controlled country in which a

Trotskyist movement exists within a few miles, in a territory the population of which is ethnically and emotionally the same as that of that country. However, the possibility of Trotskyism taking root again in China seems at best very remote.

Trotskyism in Colombia

The story of Trotskyism in Colombia divides sharply into two time periods. For a short while in the 1930s there was a small Trotskyist group in that South American country. Four decades later a more long-lasting and substantial Trotskyist movement appeared there, which soon split into two parties affiliated with different factions of International Trotskyism.

Not very much information is available concerning Colombian Trotskyism during the 1930s. The Mexican Trotskyist periodical *El Bolshevismo* reported in 1939 the existence of the Internationalist Socialist Party in Colombia. Also, the report on Latin America to the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International in May 1940 noted that "in Cali, in Colombia, we have had for several years, a small group of comrades, without any leading figure. It is very weak organizationally."¹ This would seem to refer to the same Internationalist Socialist Party. We have no information about how long this party continued to exist. It was almost four decades before a more substantial Trotskyist movement appeared in Colombia.

International Trotskyism first established an enduring presence in Colombia during the 1970s. The establishment of a Trotskyist movement there undoubtedly owed much to the presence in Colombia of Nahuel Moreno (Hugo Bressano), the Argentine Trotskyist leader who took refuge in Bogotá and there began publishing his periodical, *Revista de América*. Since Moreno was the leader of one of three factions then functioning within the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the quarrels within

Unless otherwise noted, information on the 1930s is adapted from Robert J. Alexander: *Trotskyism in Latin America*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1973.

USEC were reflected in the new Colombian Trotskyist movement almost immediately.

The revival of Trotskyism in Colombia first took shape in the Bloque Socialista, apparently founded in 1976. It was converted into the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST) in September 1977 and was accepted as a sympathizing organization of the United Secretariat.² However, by 1978 there was a second USEC sympathizing group in Colombia, the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria [LCR—Revolutionary Communist League].³

The PST was aligned with the Bolshevik Tendency (BT) of USEC, headed by Nahuel Moreno. As relations between the BT and the faction aligned with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States became increasingly difficult this fact was reflected within the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores.

The Bloque Socialista had had a periodical, *Revolución Socialista*.⁴ When the organization became the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores it began to publish another paper, *El Socialista*, but *Revolución Socialista* also continued to appear. The factional blocs formed around these two publications.⁵

In 1977 and early 1978 the PST underwent a split. It began in May 1977 with the suspension and then expulsion of Ricardo Sánchez, one of the party's principal figures. Subsequent to that it was reported that 315 members of the party, including its 1978 presidential candidate, Socorro Ramírez, had been expelled on charges of "factionalism."⁶

As a consequence of these events there emerged another Trotskyist group in Colombia, the result of the merger of those who had been expelled from the PST with the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria. This new party, formed late in 1978, was the Partido Socialista Revolucionario, and it became the Colombian affiliate of the United Secretariat.⁷

Meanwhile, the Trotskyists had partici-

pated in the 1978 elections—held in two installments, for congress and departmental (state) and municipal legislatures in February, and for president in June. The two Trotskyist groups then existing—the PSTR and LCR—joined with two other far left groups to form the Unidad Obrera y Socialista (UNIOS—Worker and Socialist Unity) coalition. They nominated “more than 1,000 workers candidates” for legislative posts and named Socorro Ramírez as their nominee for president. In the legislative contest they received only 3,000 votes, about 1 percent as many as a Communist-backed slate received.⁸

In 1979 the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores undertook to organize what they called the Simón Bolívar Brigade to fight with the Sandinistas against the dictatorship of General Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua. They had some support for this from one of the principal political commentators of the Bogotá daily newspaper *El Tiempo*, Daniel Samper. The Brigade actually sent some soldiers into battle and they were responsible for capturing the Atlantic coastal town of Bluefields. However, when they and Nicaraguans whom they had recruited began after the victory of the Sandinistas to organize a Trotskyist party in Nicaragua which was very critical of the Sandinista leadership, the new government ordered all foreign members of the Brigade expelled from the country.⁹

When the United Secretariat of the Fourth International supported the actions of the Sandinista government and dissociated itself from the Simón Bolívar Brigade, this action provoked a split in the USEC, with the Moreno-led Bolshevik Tendency, including the Colombian PSTR, breaking away. This split is dealt with in the chapter on International Workers League (Fourth International).

Both factions of Colombian Trotskyism continued to exist into the middle 1980s. In January 1982 the PSTR played host in Bogotá to an international meeting of the Moreno

Tendency which established the International Workers League (IVth International). The headquarters of the new FI faction was established in Bogotá.

Both Colombian Trotskyist factions were active in the organized labor movement, particularly in national unions which were not affiliated with any of the country's four central labor organizations. When after the 1982 election there was a conference of representatives of many of these independent unions, a PSTR leader José Arnulfo Bayona of the Educators Federation was elected to the Coordinating Committee established by this conference.¹⁰

The Trotskyists fought against the tendency of the governments of Liberal presidents Alfonso López Michelson and Julio César Turbay (1974–1982) to limit civil liberties in the name of fighting the guerrilla movements then active in the countryside. When President Belisario Betancur soon after his inauguration in 1982 sponsored an amnesty law, the PSTR strongly supported the measure and Socorro Ramírez accepted (with the backing of her party, the PSTR) membership on a “Commission for Peace” to negotiate with the guerrilla groups.¹¹ In December 1983 when a guerrilla group kidnapped the president's brother, Jaime Betancur, the PSTR expressed its strong condemnation of the action.¹²

After agreements were reached in March and August 1984 between the Betancur government and most of the guerrilla groups to call a temporary halt to the fighting and to establish a National Dialogue, the Partido Socialista Revolucionario expressed its support for this. It argued:

Together with all the forces of the left, the workers, and the people, we must organize broad forums that call for mobilization and not simply forums that discuss and make revolutionary propaganda. Moreover, in conclusion, they will have to fight to convert them into platforms for exposure and into events that call for

mobilization and set dates and means of struggle—for a demonstration of solidarity with a strike, for the civic shutdown for taking the land. . . . We, who have saluted the idea of the National Dialogue since the beginning, must participate with this perspective, which expresses our deep conviction that the liberation of the workers can only be the task of the workers themselves.¹³

When the National Dialogue was destroyed in November 1985 by an attack by the M-19 guerrilla group on the Palace of Justice in Bogotá—to which the government responded with a military attack resulting in the death of more than 100 people, including members of the Supreme Court—the PSR issued a statement. It said, "We do not support the action of the April 19 Movement" but then added that "the government of Belisario Betancur bears the sole responsibility for the deaths of the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Alfonso Reyes Echandía; of the Supreme Court judge María Inez Ramos; of the civilian personnel; and of the members of the April 19 Movement. Thus, the major blow to the so-called 'democratic' opening has come from the bipartisan government itself."¹⁴

During the election of 1982 the PSR supported the candidacy of Gerardo Molina, named by a coalition dominated by the pro-Moscow Communist Party. However, it reported that it did so "on the basis of a position of class independence and criticism of the oscillations of the candidate."¹⁵

Both Trotskyist parties held regular congresses. The Fourth Congress of the PSR met in August 1982. It dealt particularly with two questions: a "turn towards industry" on the part of its members, and a proposal made by Gerardo Molina for the establishment of a new Socialist Party, an idea the congress looked upon with skepticism.¹⁶ The PSR held its Third Congress in May 1983.¹⁷

Early in 1985 the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores took the initiative in organiz-

ing a "revolutionary united front" under the name of A Luchar! (Fight On!), together with a number of groups of Maoist and Fidelista origin. It called for a general strike against the policies of the Betancur government.¹⁸

Costa Rican Trotskyism

Trotskyism did not get started in Costa Rica (or in any of the other Central American countries) until the 1970s. It was one of the first Central American nations in which the movement began.

By 1978 there were two sympathizing organizations of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in Costa Rica, the Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores (OST), and the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT).¹ The OST was established in 1976 and it was active in several campaigns. It strongly supported the revolutionary movement against the regime of General Anastasio Somoza in neighboring Nicaragua.² It was also involved in work in the Caribbean coastal area of Costa Rica, Puerto Limón—together with a local party, the Partido Auténtico Limonense—to gain better treatment from the national government for the predominantly Black population of that area.³

The OST held its first regular convention in September 1978. Some eighty "delegates, members and international guests" were reportedly in attendance. This same report commented that "two years of organizing have brought the OST from an initial nucleus of four Trotskyists to an organization of about one hundred members with a history of important initiatives in the class struggle." Some trade unionists and some high school students were among those participating in this convention.⁴

In the 1978 general election the OST ran its own presidential candidate, Carlos Coronado Vargas. It also ran a nominee for the national assembly, Alejandra Calderón Fournier, a daughter of ex-President Rafael Calderón Guardia.⁵

Subsequent to the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979 the OST changed its political orienta-

tion. It was reported in 1982 that it had "quit Trotskyism and changed the name of the organization." As a consequence, at that time the only Trotskyist group in Costa Rica was the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, which published a periodical *Adelante!* and was associated with the Morenoist faction of International Trotskyism, the International Workers League [Fourth International].⁶

Cuban Trotskyism

The story of Trotskyism in Cuba is a sad one. After gaining considerable influence in the labor movement and in national politics during its first years (the early 1930s), it rapidly declined. Because of problems of "entrism" and factional division Cuban Trotskyism fell in the next decades to a marginal status, both in organized labor and in general politics. Finally, after the Castro regime embraced latter-day Stalinism in the early 1960s it suppressed the only surviving Trotskyist group in Cuba, which did not prevent some factions of International Trotskyism from extending strong support to Castro's government.

The Early Years of Cuban Trotskyism

The founder of Cuban Trotskyism was Sandalio Junco, one of the leading Communist trade unionists and the most prominent Black leader of the Cuban Communist Party. He was International Secretary of the Communist-controlled Confederación Nacional Obrera de Cuba (CNOC) when he was forced to flee into exile in 1928 in face of persecution by the dictatorship of President Gerardo Machado.

Junco was to stay abroad for almost four years. During that time he worked for a while in Mexico with Julio Antonio Mella, the leader of the Cuban Communist exiles in that country, attended the Latin American Communist trade union conference in Montevideo in 1929, and then went to Europe and ultimately to the Soviet Union.

During his stay abroad Sandalio Junco had considerable contact with Andrés Nin, the Spanish Trotskyist leader. Whether this

contact occurred when Nin was still an official of the Red International of Labor Unions in Moscow or after he had returned to Spain is not clear. After Junco's return to Cuba he and his friends received considerable printed material from the Spanish Trotskyists, particularly things written by Andrés Nin and Juan Andrade. It seems likely that Junco had decided to align himself with the Trotskyist opposition by the time he returned to Cuba.

Junco returned home early in 1932. Soon after his return he wrote a memorandum which he submitted to the Communist International criticizing its analysis of the Cuban social and political situation. That document, although having little influence on the Comintern, brought about Junco's expulsion from the Communist Party late in 1932.

Outside of the party, Sandalio Junco organized what was first called Oposición Comunista, but soon took the name Partido Bolchevique-Leninista (PBL). The new party decided to join the International Left Opposition. However, at least judging from the published writings of Leon Trotsky, there apparently was little or no personal contact between him and his new Cuban supporters.

Upon his return home Sandalio Junco quickly reassumed a leadership role in the trade unions. He became one of the principal figures in the Federación Obrera de La Habana, a major labor organization in the capital city, where the Oposición Comunista shared leadership with the new Aprista Party and the Socialists. There was a counterpart of that federation in the eastern city of Santiago, and these two groups constituted the principal opposition within the labor movement to the CNOC, which was still under Communist leadership.

The PBL also drew support from the revolutionary student movement, particularly the Ala Izquierda (Left Wing), the principal rival of the terrorist-oriented Student Directorate. The principal student leader of the PBL was Charles Simeon.

In August 1933 dictator Gerardo Machado

Material in this entry is adapted from Robert J. Alexander: *Trotskyism in Latin America*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1973.

was forced out of power as a consequence of a massive political general strike—which the CNOC (as the result of a deal with Machado) tried to “call off,” although it had not launched the movement in the first place. A few weeks later, on September 4, 1933, a coup organized by noncommissioned officers of the Army led by Sergeant Fulgencio Batista, and student organizations of the University of Havana, resulted in the installation of a radical-nationalist government under President Ramón Grau San Martín of the university medical faculty.

The labor organizations in which the PBL held leadership supported the Grau San Martín government. In contrast, the Communist Party and the CNOC violently opposed it, in conformity with the Comintern’s line that all left-wing groups except the Stalinists were “social fascists.” The combined opposition of the Stalinists and the United States Department of State finally brought about the ouster of the Grau government in January 1934 by Colonel (ex-Sergeant) Fulgencio Batista.

During the following year the Federación Obrera de La Habana, under Sandalio Junco’s leadership, organized a number of strikes in the capital while at the same time carrying on a bitter struggle with the CNOC. The PBL probably reached the high point of its membership at that time, it being estimated that there were more than 600 people in its ranks.

In March 1935 a revolutionary general strike took place in which the Partido Bolchevique-Leninista played a major role. In organizing this movement the PBL worked closely with Joven Cuba, a political group organized by Antonio Guiteras, who had been the most left-wing member of the Grau San Martín government.

During the months preceding the general strike the PBL was quite open about its plans to organize a “democratic anti-imperialist revolution of the workers and peasants,” even publishing a program of government which had been agreed upon by the PBL and

Joven Cuba. These proclamations brought strong protests from the United States section of the International Left Opposition, the Workers Party. A. J. Muste, then secretary general of the Workers Party, objected both to the slogan of a “workers and peasants” government and to collaboration with Joven Cuba, suggesting that a broader unity committee ought to be established including the Stalinists. These criticisms seem to have had little impact on the immediate policy of the Cuban Trotskyists.

But there was clearly considerable dissidence within the PBL. The secretary general of the party submitted a report to the International Secretariat in Paris, dated March 20, 1935, in which he reported on the tensions within the party between those whom he identified as being “real” supporters of Fourth Internationalism, and more “opportunist” elements.

When the strike actually took place, under the leadership of the Committee of Proletarian Defense in which the PBL and Joven Cuba were the most important elements, it was met by the full force of the Batista dictatorship. The headquarters of all trade unions were closed, large numbers of people were arrested, terror was openly used by the government. The labor movement did not recover from the effects of this defeat for several years.

One major casualty of the general strike was Antonio Guiteras, who was captured and killed by the police. Although this seemed to open the way for Trotskyist penetration of the Joven Cuba organization exactly the opposite occurred: most of the leaders of the PBL entered Joven Cuba, but they soon lost all contact with Trotskyism. In 1937 Joven Cuba itself merged with the Partido Revolucionario Cubano (Auténtico) of ex-President Ramón Grau San Martín.

For the following twenty years the ex-Trotskyist Auténtico leaders constituted the major element opposing the Stalinists within the new Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC), the labor confederation

which Batista allowed to be established under Stalinist control in 1938. From 1947 until the advent of the Castro regime at the beginning of 1959, they controlled the CTC. However, they had long since ceased to have any affiliation with or interest in Trotskyism.

The Partido Bolchevique-Leninista continued to exist, however, although no longer having any major role in the labor movement or any significant part in general politics. It soon took the name Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR) and Pierre Naville listed the POR as the Cuban section of the Fourth International at the FI Founding Congress in September 1938.¹ He estimated its membership as being about one hundred.²

Cuban Trotskyism Until and During the Castro Revolution

The POR was centered principally in the eastern city of Guantánamo where it had some modest influence among the railroad workers. At the time of the split between the Communist and Auténtico parties' factions of the Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba in 1947 the Trotskyists played little part, although urging maintenance of a united organization.

During the 1944 election the POR endorsed ex-President Ramón Grau San Martín, and urged its supporters to vote for trade unionists running as congressional candidates on the ticket of Grau's Auténtico Party. By the municipal and congressional elections in 1946 they had become disillusioned with the Grau government. When efforts to run their own candidates in the Guantánamo area were thwarted by the electoral tribunal's refusal to recognize their party they urged abstention from voting.

With the split in the Fourth International in 1952-53, the Cuban party stayed with the Pabloite International Secretariat (IS). Some years later, when J. Posadas led the Latin American Bureau of the IS in setting up its own version of the FI, the POR joined the

Posadas tendency. They also changed their name to Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskyista). The anti-Pablo International Committee, and subsequently the United Secretariat, did not have any section in Cuba.

The POR(T) is said to have had members who fought in the mountains with the Castro forces sometime between late 1956 and the victory of those forces in January 1959. Subsequently, they strongly supported the movement to the left of the Castro regime. During this early period of the Cuban Revolution the POR(T) was violently attacked by the Communists but was left more or less alone by the Castro government.

However, in May 1961 the Castro regime suppressed the POR(T)'s newspaper *Voz Proletaria* and destroyed plates for Trotsky's *Permanent Revolution* which the POR(T) was about to publish. The Ministry of Labor took over the print shop which the Trotskyists had used and subsequently denied all newsprint to the Trotskyists. As a consequence, they had to resort to the mimeograph machine.

Castro government persecution of the Trotskyists intensified. In August 1962 two of their leaders were arrested for distributing a statement of the POR(T) Political Bureau to a meeting of delegates from sugar cane cooperatives. That statement complained about the lack of democracy in the labor movement and in the cane cooperatives.

In August 1962 the POR(T) held its Second National Conference in Havana. It adopted a series of resolutions including one endorsing the action of the Latin American Bureau of the International Secretariat in "reorganizing" the Fourth International, that is, the establishment of the Posadas-led version of the FI.

Finally, in December 1963 the Castro government gave the coup de grace to the POR(T). Its principal leaders were arrested and were tried for distributing an illegal periodical, advocating overthrow of the Castro regime and being critical of Fidel Castro.

They were sentenced to jail terms ranging from two to nine years.

In January 1966 Fidel Castro used the platform of the Tricontinental Congress in Havana to deliver a violent attack on Trotskyism. He particularly attacked activities in various parts of America by the Posadista tendency.

However, in spite of the anti-Trotskyist rhetoric engaged in by Castro and other leaders of the Cuban Revolution, and the suppression of the only existing Trotskyist group in the country, the United Secretariat faction of International Trotskyism was able to maintain more or less cordial relations with the Castro regime. This was particularly the case with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, some of whose leaders visited Cuba from time to time. The SWP had early proclaimed the Castro regime to be a "workers state." But so, for that matter, had the Posadista wing of International Trotskyism.

Trotskyism in Cyprus

Trotskyism in Cyprus has certainly been one of the more marginal elements of the international Trotskyist movement. To a considerable degree it has been a reflection or offshoot of the movement in Greece.

There is no evidence available that a Trotskyist group was established in Cyprus, then a British colony, before World War II. In his report to the Founding Congress of the Fourth International in September 1938 on the national groups which were affiliated to or associated with the FI, Pierre Naville made no mention of any such group in Cyprus.¹ Nor is there any indication that Cyprus was represented at the first postwar Conference of the Fourth International in March 1946.²

However, by the time of the Second Congress of the Fourth International early in 1948 a Trotskyist party had been organized in Cyprus. It was represented at that Congress, which adopted the following resolution: "After having heard a report on the activity and request for affiliation of the Internationalist Communist Party of Cyprus, and assured that it involves an organization functioning in a viable fashion and which adheres to the program and principles of the IVth, the World Congress recognizes this organization as an official section of the IVth International in Cyprus, and seats its representative to the present Congress."³

It is perhaps significant to note that the name taken by the Cypriot party was the same as that which had recently been adopted by the reunified Greek organization.

Although the United Secretariat paid little or no attention to developments in Cyprus in the resolutions adopted at its various congresses, there is indication that at least as late as 1970 that group did have a Cyprus

section. Inevitably that section became involved in the overriding political issue facing that country since before the attainment of independence, that is, the conflict between the Greek and Turkish ethnic groups on the island.

On April 15, 1970, the Cyprus section of the United Secretariat issued a statement on the country's ethnic conflict. It started, "As we have repeatedly declared in the past, the solution of the Cyprus problem is prevented by international imperialism by its interference in the Cyprus dispute, through its agents, in an effort to create a communal strife or civil war, slaughter and chaos, so that it may find the pretext of invading Cyprus ostensibly for the 'restoration of peace and order,' but in reality for the purpose of establishing a military base for NATO in case international imperialism finds it necessary to attack the Arab people and suppress their revolution."

This statement ended with the observation that "As international imperialism failed in its efforts to create chaos in Cyprus, and find the necessary pretext of intervening, imperialism has turned for assistance to its old watchdog, General Grivas, a reactionary anti-Communist who is just barking at Makarios, accusing him that he is betraying the cause of Cyprus, on the ground that he does not declare war against the Turks, and unite Cyprus with Greece. We are sure that even this trick will not catch on, as the people in Cyprus have now acquired an unerring criterion enabling it to sense all the maneuvers, tricks, and traps of imperialism."⁴

The only other element which evidently has had a section in Cyprus has been the Tendance Marxiste-Révolutionnaire Internationale (TMRI) of Michel Pablo. In 1982 there existed in Cyprus a group called For Socialism, the same name as the Greek affiliate of the TMRI and described as a "derivative" of the Greek organization.⁵

Trotskyism in Czechoslovakia

Internal Divisions

Virtually all of the Czechoslovakian Trotskyists of the late 1920s and the 1930s came out of the Communist Party. They broke with the CP at different times and came from different parts of the country. These were among the circumstances which made it particularly difficult to establish a united Trotskyist movement in Czechoslovakia.

One source of disunity among Czechoslovakian Trotskyists is the underlying fact that Czechoslovakia is a multinational country. Carved out of portions of the pre-1918 Austro-Hungarian Empire, it contained three major ethnic groups as well as several minor ones.

The two elements from which the country took its name were Slavic peoples, the Czechs and the Slovaks. The other large group consisted of the so-called Sudeten Germans who lived along the western border, contiguous to Germany, in one of the more heavily industrialized parts of the country. In addition, in the north along the Polish frontier were Polish-speaking people in the Teschen area, and in the easternmost strip between Hungary and Poland, known as Carpatho-Ukraine, were Ukrainian-speaking people.

Different groups professing loyalty to the ideas and policies of the International Left Opposition developed in each of the three major ethnic areas of Czechoslovakia. However, somewhat different ideological and factional origins, as well as personal rivalries, complicated the problem of bringing unity among the different ethnic Trotskyist groups.

Sudeten German Trotskyists

The largest element in Czechoslovakian Trotskyism was that in the Sudeten German

region. The leader of the group was also probably the best known figure in Czechoslovakian Trotskyism, Alois Neurath. Born in 1886, Neurath was one of the founders of the German section of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. He was secretary of the party between 1921 and 1926 as well as a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Both nationally and in the Comintern he was a supporter of Zinoviev.¹

Neurath was expelled with a group of other leaders of the Communist Party in 1928. They did not form a pro-Trotskyist group, but rather a Communist Party (Opposition) which became a member of the International Communist Opposition, the group associated in the popular mind with the Soviet Right Opposition of Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsy rather than with the Left Opposition.

The Czechoslovak CPO gained control of the Communist-controlled trade union group, the LAV, and merged it into the Social Democratic-controlled OSC in 1930. The CPO was particularly strong in the Sudeten German region, where the influence of Neurath was extensive.²

The Neurath group at its inception controlled the Communist Party organization in Reichenberg (Liberec) through its secretary, Kreutz. After considerable proselytizing by him for the Opposition Kreutz had been removed. Nevertheless, the Neurath opposition group also had local organizations in Karlsbad, Krumau and a number of other Sudeten German cities.³

For some time the Neurath group published a periodical, *Neue Tribune*.⁴ Subsequently, it put out another German-language newspaper, *Unser Wort*, in Prague.⁵ They and the other Czechoslovakian Trotskyist groups had considerable difficulty in maintaining a regular official organ.

By 1932 Alois Neurath and his supporters had abandoned the Right Opposition and become associated with the International Left Opposition.⁶ A relatively late Sudeten

convert to Trotskyism who became an important figure in the Czechoslovakian Trotskyist ranks was Joseph Guttman. He had been a member of the Political Bureau and Secretariat of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party as late as 1931, but he was very much opposed to the policy which the Communists had followed in Germany in the period before the rise of Hitler to power. As a consequence, he was expelled from the CP in 1933. Subsequently, he joined forces with the Trotskyist leader Z. Kalandra to publish a new periodical, *Proletar*.⁷

With the rise of Hitler to power in Germany several Trotskyist leaders from that country went to Czechoslovakia. These included Anton Grylewicz and Wenzel Kozlecki, who entered into the activities of the Sudeten German Trotskyists.⁸

Czech Trotskyists

One of the earliest pro-Trotsky groups to be established in the Czech-speaking parts of the country was that of Arthur Pollack, a professor at the University of Prague. It consisted principally of intellectuals and students. Although it published no regular periodical, it did from time to time put into print expositions of its ideas. One of these was a pamphlet entitled "The Struggle in the Comintern."⁹

Another group of Czech Trotskyists in Prague was that established by Otto Friedman, who had been a leader of the Communist Youth when in 1927 he established contacts with the Russian Left Opposition. He began to publish *Rudy Prapor* (*Red Flag*). Associated with him was Karel Fischer (also known as Michalec), an old collaborator of Zinoviev.¹⁰ Once this group became avowedly Trotskyist it published a Czech-language periodical, *Delnicka Politika*. It came in for some criticism from those close to Trotsky for maintaining friendly relations with the group in Austria headed by Joseph Frey.¹¹

Still another Czech Trotskyist group cen-

tered on Prague was that headed by Wolfgang Václav Salus. At the age of sixteen he had entered the Young Communist League, in 1924. Three years later he was a delegate to a congress of the International Communist Youth in Moscow, and there came into contact with the Russian Left Opposition. There were some reports that he had an interview with Trotsky himself.

Salus (who used the pseudonym W. Krieger) was one of the first people to take the lead in establishing a Left Communist faction in the Czechoslovak Communist Party, and as a consequence was expelled from the party. Upon Trotsky's exile in 1929 Salus volunteered to serve as Trotsky's personal secretary and bodyguard in Prinkipo, which he did for a year. Once back in Prague he returned to leadership of the local Trotskyists.¹² His group edited for a time a periodical, *Jiskra*, named after the publication edited by Lenin early in the century.¹³

It was probably the Salus group to which Trotsky was referring when he informed the Russian Left Opposition in March 1930 that "the Czechoslovak group, which came into existence several months ago, is working with great energy; the first of its publications should be out very soon."¹⁴

In the southern city of Brno [Brünn] there was still another Czech-speaking Trotskyist group. It was headed by Vladimír Burian, who had been one of the founders of the Communist Party in that city. He had edited in Brno a review *Rovnost* and a weekly newspaper *Svernost* for the party. For some time he had been editor of the German-language edition of the Comintern's weekly *Inprecor* in Vienna, and subsequently had spent the years 1925 to 1927 in Moscow. There he had come into contact with the Left Opposition. After spending several years in Berlin, he returned to Brno in 1932 and there established a Left Opposition group.¹⁵

Slovak Trotskyists

The third and smallest ethnic group of Trotskyists was that in Slovakia. It was cen-

tered in Bratislava, the principal city of the region, and was headed by Hynek Lenorovic, one of the founders of the Communist Party in Slovakia. He was first won to the Communist cause while a patient in a tuberculosis sanitarium in Merano, Italy, in 1923. Two other patients converted there at the same time were Jan Frankel and Kiri Kopp, who also were to become Czechoslovakian Trotskyist leaders.¹⁶ Lenorovic subsequently became a leader of the Communist student organization. He had entered into contact with the Russian Left Opposition as early as 1925, and became one of the first Czechoslovak Trotskyist leaders.¹⁷ He established the Trotskyist group in Slovakia in March 1929.¹⁸

Another leader of the Bratislava group was Václav Skandera. It made some progress among both Slovak and Hungarian speaking workers in the Bratislava area.¹⁹

Leon Trotsky was not entirely satisfied with the orthodoxy of Hynek Lenorovic. In December 1934 he wrote a critique of Lenorovic's ideas, "Contribution to a Discussion on the Theoretical Foundations of the I.C.L." He accused Lenorovic of various theoretical errors but approved of his insistence that it was time to establish new Communist parties, including a new one in the Soviet Union.²⁰

One other Czechoslovak Trotskyist of note was particularly closely associated with Leon Trotsky himself and played a relatively small role in the organization in Czechoslovakia. This was Jan Frankel. He succeeded Wolfgang Salus as Trotsky's secretary in 1930 and served in that capacity until 1933. Thereafter he continued to collaborate closely with Trotsky, traveling widely to report on the state of the movement in various countries.²¹

Czechoslovak Trotskyists

Czechoslovak Trotskyists, Trotsky, and the International

The Czechoslovakian Trotskyists were one of the nine national groups represented at

the April 1930 "preliminary conference" of the International Left Opposition in Paris, the first international gathering of Trotsky's followers.²² The Czechoslovakian delegate was Jan Frankel, representing the Lenorovich group. "A student group . . . later endorsed the decisions taken at the meeting."²³ It seems probable that that was the element headed by Arthur Pollack.

In September 1933 Walter Held (Heinz Epe), who visited Czechoslovakia on behalf of the International Secretariat, reported back on the various groups in the country professing loyalty to the International Left Opposition. He recommended that the Neurath group be recognized as the official Czechoslovakian section of the international movement. He also urged that "friendly pressure" be brought on that group to include within its leadership some non-German speaking figures, naming specifically Lenorovic, Skandera, and Burian.²⁴

There is no indication as to whether Walter Held's advice was followed at that time by the International Secretariat. It appears that it was not until February 1938 that the dispersed Trotskyist groups of Czechoslovakia were in fact brought together to form the Revolutionary Socialist Party. The factions represented at this unity congress were those of *Jiskra-Das Banner* led by Salus and Kopp, *Avant-Garde* headed by Neurath and Haas, and the Proletar group headed by Kalandra and Guttman.²⁵ It was reported at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International that Wolfgang Salus in Prague headed the official Czechoslovakian section of the International.²⁶

Trotsky himself was from time to time in epistolary contact with his Czechoslovakian followers. As early as August 1930 he wrote a "Letter to the Communist Workers of Czechoslovakia" (clearly communicated through his followers there) in which he argued in favor of the International Left Opposition proposal that the Communist parties and other workers organizations in the capitalist countries should launch campaigns for their governments to extend wide credits to

the Soviet Union to help meet its import needs in connection with its Five Year Plan development efforts.²⁷

In January 1936 Trotsky corresponded with Erich Loffler, a lawyer of Reichenberg who belonged to a small group of professional people in that city who were particularly active in raising money for Trotskyist activities. Loffler had raised questions about Trotsky's characterization of the Soviet Union as a "workers state," and Trotsky undertook to answer him at some length.²⁸

More than two years later, Trotsky wrote his Czechoslovakian followers concerning doubts that some of them had at that time concerning Trotsky's hostility toward the Spanish *POUM*, and about the efficacy of attempting to declare the establishment of the Fourth International in the near future. He reiterated his position on both of these issues.²⁹

Although there were undoubtedly other communications between Leon Trotsky and his Czechoslovakian followers, certainly the most politically significant of these was his "remarks on Czechoslovakia" which was dated June 2, 1938 and basically responded to the question, "What would be the tactics of the Bolshevik-Leninists in Czechoslovakia in face of the aggression from fascist Germany?" His response to this question was quite clear.

Trotsky first developed the idea that Czechoslovakia was a nation of "internal colonies" in which the six million Czechs "colonized" the nine million people of the country who were not Czechs. Therefore, he argued, the various "colonized" groups—Slovaks, Sudeten Germans, Hungarians, Poles, and Carpatho-Ukrainians (who are "really part of Russia")—had no reason to support the continued existence of Czechoslovakia.

Furthermore, Trotsky argued, Czechoslovakia "is a country which, from the military point of view, is doomed to catastrophe. . . . Czechoslovakia can be saved from fascism only by revolution and revolution can be provoked in Germany only by the revolu-

tionary attitude of workers in other countries. . . . Imagine," Trotsky asked, "in Czechoslovakia that we have a revolutionary policy and that it leads to the conquest of power. It would be a hundred times more dangerous to Hitler than patriotic support of Czechoslovakia." Therefore, Trotsky concluded, "That is why it is absolutely obligatory that our comrades follow a defeatist policy."³⁰

Czechoslovak Trotskyists After 1938

Although a "defeatist policy" by the Czechoslovakian Trotskyists certainly had no influence one way or the other on what happened in the country, the overrunning of Czechoslovakia by the Nazis as a result of the Munich Agreement, which in effect liquidated the first Czechoslovakian republic, resulted in the temporary suppression of all of the Czechoslovakian parties and groups. It also resulted in the complete and permanent (at least until now) destruction of the Czechoslovak Trotskyist movement.

Of course, the end of an organized Trotskyist movement did not mean the end of the political activities of all those who had led and belonged to that movement: Their fates were quite diverse.

Alois Neurath ultimately ended up in Sweden after having been captured by the Nazis and then escaping. He reached approximately the same conclusions as the Shachtmanite faction in the United States Trotskyist movement, that a new ruling class had taken power in the Soviet Union. Consequently, he broke off all relations with the international Trotskyist movement and in the postwar period was active in the Swedish Social Democratic Party. He died in Sweden in April 1955.³¹

Other ex-Trotskyists were victims of the Stalinist purges in Czechoslovakia from 1949 to 1951. One of these was Herman Taussig, who had been deported to Buchenwald during the war but survived. Upon his return to his native country after the conflict he rejoined the Communist Party. It is

not recorded what role he played in the CP in the immediate postwar period, but in 1951 he was arrested and charged with being an ex-Trotskyist. He died in prison at age seventy before it was possible to bring him to trial.³²

Another Trotskyist victim of the Czechoslovakian purges was Zvis Kalandra (apparently not the Slovak leader before noted) who had joined the Trotskyists after being expelled from the Communist Party in 1936 for having written a pamphlet on "The Secrets of the Moscow Trials." He was arrested in November 1949 but was not put on trial until May 1950. At that time, he "confessed" to working with "western imperialists" and to being a "traitor and a spy." He was convicted and executed early in June.³³

Trotskyists and Postwar Dissidents

Stalinist control of postwar Czechoslovakia made it impossible for Trotskyism to be revived. However, for some time after the "Prague Spring" of 1968 the international Trotskyist movement showed considerable sympathy for one of the dissident groups which appeared at that time. This was the Revolutionary Youth Movement and then the Revolutionary Socialist Party which was established in 1969. That was a group which was Marxist, but not clearly aligned with any of the existing Marxist, or Marxist-Leninist tendencies. Among the material which they published was a theoretical study by the Belgian Trotskyist leader Ernest Mandel.³⁴

The Revolutionary Socialist Party was short-lived. Early in 1970 a number of its leaders were put on trial. Among the other charges brought against them was that of being "Trotskyites."³⁵

By the early 1980s the international Trotskyist tendency headed by the Hungarian exile Varga claimed to have affiliated with it the Revolutionary Labor League of Czechoslovakia.³⁶ It appears likely that this organization consisted of exiles rather than actually existing inside Czechoslovakia.

Danish Trotskyism

Early Danish Trotskyism

A Trotskyist organization first appeared in Denmark in the 1930s. One source claims that the first such group was established in 1932. However, since this source attributes the organization to the efforts of German refugee Trotskyists, particularly George Jungclas, this early date seems unlikely.¹ Trotsky, in his report on his meeting with his supporters from various countries during his short stay in Copenhagen in November 1932, makes no mention of any Danish representation at that gathering. Nor do George Breitman and Sarah Lovell nor Rodolphe Prager in their listing of those people attending.²

However, as Anton Schou Madsen has pointed out, the lack of a Trotskyist organization in Denmark in 1932 "does not mean that Leon Trotsky during his visit to Copenhagen that year did not make political contacts in Denmark. As a matter of fact, he established strong bonds with his host in Copenhagen, the socialdemocratic youth leader, Bernhard Boeggild, who from 1932 to 1936 not only propagated Trotskyist ideas inside the Danish Socialdemocratic Party, but in many ways helped to form an independent Danish group (George Jungclas stayed at his home, and Boeggild corresponded with Trotsky.)"³

It was apparently Boeggild who established the first avowedly Trotskyist group in Denmark in 1934. Although consisting of only three or four people, it took the name Den Danske Sektion of Internationale Kommunisters Forbund [Bolshevik-Leninister] or Danish Section of the International Communist League.⁴ We presume that it was probably this group which published the first Trotskyist periodical in Denmark, 4. *Internationale*, which certainly appeared

before the middle of the 1930s.⁵ In any case, the group was short-lived.

In that early period, "apart from the German emigrants, the early Danish groups had three main sources of recruitment: the syndicalists, the Social Democratic Youth (and in some cases anarchist elements) and the Stalinist party. . . . These very different elements were organized in several groups with one central Danish figure, Paul Moth."⁶

Trotskyist recruiting was most successful inside the Social Democratic Youth. There an organization called the International Socialistist Brevium (International Socialist Letter Club), led by Paul Moth, changed its name to Leninistisk Arbejdegroupe (Leninist Work Group). When they were finally thrown out of the Social Democratic ranks in 1935 they reorganized as Socialistisk Arbejder Ungdem (Socialist Workers Youth) and began issuing a magazine, *Klassekamp* (*Class Struggle*).

The struggle against the Moscow Trials brought the Trotskyists into contact with a number of trade unionists and disillusioned Communists, but they were not apparently able to make any organizational gains as a result of these contacts.

In 1937 a "democratic discussion forum but without a common platform," the Socialist Cooperation Association, was established with Trotskyist participation. It soon broke up into the Syndicalist Youth Group and the International Communists (IK). Within the IK, in turn, there existed the old Leninistisk Arbejdegroupe which maintained contact with the Trotskyist international, and another faction which was affiliated with the London Bureau.⁷

Meanwhile, George Jungclas had come to the conclusion that the group around Poul Moth was very sectarian, accusing them of "repeating stereotype abstractions, discrediting the Fourth International." He finally broke with Moth and turned to a group formerly associated with the German Brandlerites and led by Karl Metz. Together they organized the Revolutionære Socialister (RS—Revolutionary Socialists), which by

1939 had about thirty members. The two outstanding figures in this group were a former Stalinist youth leader, Borge Trolle, and former syndicalist Carl Heinrich Petersen.⁸

There is no evidence that the Danish Trotskyists were represented at any of the international gatherings of the movement during that period. Denmark was not one of the twelve countries with organizations which participated in the founding of the Fourth International in September 1938.⁹

However, the Danish Trotskyists, with Georg Jungclas's help, played an active role for some time during World War II. One of the first underground journals to appear after the Nazi occupation in April 1940 was *Arbejderpolitik*, which was put out by a group of young Trotskyists together with members of the Social Democratic youth and student groups. It appeared from November 1940 to June 1941. Subsequently, the Trotskyists were able to put out their own clandestine periodical, *Klassekamp*, between October 1942 and June 1944.¹⁰

Anton Schou Madsen has sketched the activities of the Trotskyists in the underground: "The fight of resistance was essentially political. The trade unions were inadequate [they were a means to *economic* fights and consisted of *legal* structures]. Therefore the working class had to create illegal organs for a political fight (so-called resistance groups) organized within the factories and co-ordinated on a national level. They should gather the avantgarde but make a platform for mass action."

Madsen added that "from 1941 the RS strengthened its contacts to the working places and to the trade unions. This led to the formation of the first proletarian resistance group (end of 1943: *Arbejderoppositionen—The Workers Opposition*). The RS's political line was advanced in *Marxisme* (a theoretical magazine) and *Klassekamp*, and leaflets. *Arbejderoppositionen* published an illegal bi-weekly of the same name (average of numbers printed: 5,000)."¹¹ The Trotsky-

ists also participated actively in the network which was developed to smuggle Jews and German military deserters to Sweden.¹²

In June 1944 Danish Trotskyism suffered a devastating blow. Anton Schou Madsen has noted that "almost all members of the RS were arrested, including Jungclas and Trolle. Most of them were sent to a concentration camp near the Danish/German border. Two members fled to Sweden. Only two other RS members and a large portion of the *Arbejderopposition* (*Workers Opposition*), which collaborated closely with the Trotskyists, went free." After the "popular strike" at the end of the month, however, "most of the *Arbejderopposition* was arrested by Gestapo."

Madsen added that "almost all members survived the war, but in a state of physical and psychological exhaustion, having lost contact with the workers movement. Actually the RS was wiped out in the very moment when the mass radicalization opened the best possible chances to recruit and gain influence."¹³

Postwar Danish Trotskyism

Right after the war the Danish Trotskyists published a monthly paper, *Arbejderpolitik*, which was not presented as a frankly Trotskyist periodical. For a while, their group assumed the name of the paper.¹⁴ The Danish group was not represented in the First International Conference of the Fourth International, which met in Paris in March 1946, according to the official communique issued by the International at the conclusion of the meeting.¹⁵

In 1946 *Revolutionaere Socialister* was able to reestablish the wartime *Arbejderopposition* group. At the time of a widespread strike movement in May of that year it organized a meeting bringing together five hundred workers. However, Anton Schou Madsen has noted that "the RS led by Borge Trolle made the same mistakes as most of the European sections, not taking into ac-

count that the vast majority of the striking workers . . . were members of the reformist and Stalinist parties. Instead of helping those workers to force their . . . leaders and organizations to organize a general strike, the RS falsely hoped to be able to organize a general strike themselves, through the shop steward network. This was of course impossible . . . and the Arbejderopposition soon disappeared under the pressure from a hysterical campaign launched by the bourgeois, social-democratic and Stalinist newspapers all over the country."¹⁶

Meanwhile, in January 1947 the Danish Trotskyites were able to join with some Communists who had hoped that their party would lead a revolution after the war and were alienated by the party's joining a coalition government. They formed the Revolutionære Kommunistler (Revolutionary Communists) which declared its adherence to the Fourth International. Preben Kinch has noted that it "had some influence in the big strikes in Denmark in the first years after the war."¹⁷

There is disagreement on how large the membership of the RK was. Preben Kinch puts it at 100-150, whereas Anton Schou Madsen said that the organization didn't have more than sixty or seventy members.¹⁸ It published, usually as a fortnightly, *Det Nye Arbejderblad* (*The New Workers' Magazine*).¹⁹

By 1948 the Danish Trotskyists had suffered a major split. A majority of them, including most of those active in the organized labor movement, decided to carry out entrism in the Social Democratic Party. Most of those who did so were totally absorbed in the SDP ranks, some of them reaching fairly high levels within the party, but they ceased being Trotskyists.²⁰

There were two other groups in this factional split. One, around Borge Trolle "made priority to theoretical work" and apparently dropped out of active political work. The third element, centering on Poul Moth, continued to exist under the name RK (4. Interna-

tionale). Anton Schou Madsen has said of this faction that "there were several temporary groups, but the final result was that the Moth people together with Preben Kinch and others formed a group in 1950 called Internationale Socialistler (4. Internationale)."²¹

The IR revived the newspaper *Det Nye Arbejderblad* in 1950, but it ceased to appear in 1954.²² The RK meanwhile had been accepted as a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, and had two delegates at the Second World Congress in 1948. Its successor, Internationale Socialistler, had the same status and it was represented at the Third Congress in 1951, where its representatives strongly opposed entrism into the Social Democratic Party.²³

The ending of the newspaper *Det Nye Arbejderblad* in 1954 seemed to signal the end for the time being of organized Trotskyism in Denmark. However, it was able to revive in 1956. At that time, as a consequence of Khrushchev's Twentieth Congress speech and the Hungarian Revolution, a group of Communist Party members broke away to establish the Socialist Party of Denmark (DSP). The Trotskyists of the former Poul Moth group (but without Moth, who had retired from political activity) were able to join this party, which "remained small, but the Trotskyists were able to recruit valuable cadres among its members."

Then in 1958, Axel Larsen, until then chairman of the Communist Party, also broke with it and established the Socialistiske Folkeparti (People's Socialist Party—SF). The DSP merged with the SF and the Trotskyists were able to function within the new party as "an accepted, even if not officially recognized fraction, as the SF has never forbidden the formation of fractions, even if the right to do it is not officially included in the party rules."

Preben Kinch has written that "what in this period probably most characterized the Danish Trotskyists was their participation in anti-imperialist work, especially in relation to the Algerian Revolution. Under the

guidance of leading comrades of the 4th International, especially Comrade Pablo and after his arrest in Holland, the German comrade Jungclas, the Danish section (which was officially recognized as a section in 1958) engaged in the struggle for support for the revolution in Algeria, both legally and illegally, and many Danish comrades were active in helping the Algerian rebels get arms for their fight against French imperialism."

During this period the Trotskyists remained active within the SF. According to Kinch, they "had the leadership of the local branches in some of the traditional workers districts in Copenhagen." They also were active in the affairs of the Fourth International, most of the Danish Trotskyists supporting the Pablo tendency, although later they "refused to follow this tendency in breaking with the International."²⁴

From SUF to RSF

The Danish Trotskyist movement was able to take some advantage of the upswing in radical student activity in the late 1960s. A more or less official account of the evolution of Danish Trotskyism in this period observed that the sections of the USEC "threw themselves into the movements which sprang out of the youth radicalization. . . . Notwithstanding the mistakes that were committed in this period, there can be no doubt that the Danish section . . . [was] able to take a qualitative step forward. . . ."²⁵

The Trotskyists' principal vehicle for benefiting from the movements of the 1960s was an organization known first as the Socialistisk Ungdoms Forum (Forum of Socialist Youth—SUF). It was established in 1961 and has been described by Michael Svendsen Pedersen as "an important center for the development of political arguments and the formation of factions of the 'New Left' in the 1960s. It was a kind of nursery for left wing people who later moved in various directions."

Pedersen went on to say that "when the

SUF was founded in 1961 it was neutralist and pacifist (disarmament, conscientious objection, solidarity with 3rd world). . . . The SUF's showdown with Moscow Communism was expressed in its affiliation to the SF as its youth organization (1962)."

At the Seventh Congress of the organization in May 1967, the SUF "exchanged its neutralist Socialism for revolutionary Marxism." Then in 1968, following a split in the Socialistisk Folksparti in December 1967 and the formation of the Venstresocialistjerne (Left Socialists—vs), the SUF became the youth group of that new party.²⁶

Between 1968 and 1971 five different factions fought for control of the SUF. One was KF(M-L), the pro-Chinese Kommunistisk Forbund, Marxister-Leninister (Communist League, Marxists-Leninists). Another pro-Chinese group was the Kommunistisk Arbejdskreds (KAK—Communist Work Circle). A third tendency was a Bordiguist group, the Internationale Kommunistiske Parti (International Communist Party). The Trotskyists of Revolutionære Socialister (RS) constituted the fourth element. Finally, there was the Forum tendency "comprising all members who did not belong to one of the Marxist tendencies."

The first casualty of the factional struggle within the SUF was the KF(M-L) group, which was expelled by the SUF's Tenth Congress in May 1969 "because of the methods it had used in its attempt at making the SUF the KF(M-L)'s youth organization." Then in May 1970 the other pro-Chinese group, the KAK, withdrew from the SUF and at about the same time the leader of the Bordiguist group, Gustav Bunzel, was suspended and then excluded "because of disagreements about money from a study circle."

Michael Svendsen Pedersen has cited Ejner Friis Pedersen's generalization about these factional struggles: "A characteristic feature of the conflicts between the Trotskyists and the KAK/Bordiga tendencies was—just as it was the case in the conflict between KF(M-L) and the SUF—that it was not a political showdown on the basis of a political

discussion but mainly an organizational conflict."²⁷

While this struggle for control of the sur was going on, the Revolutionaere Socialister was publishing the bimonthly magazine *Socialistisk Information*. It was deeply involved in the movement against the United States war in Vietnam and also participated in the student upheaval of the period.²⁸ This activity helped to draw many members of the sur toward Trotskyism.

The final step in converting the sur into a Trotskyist group took place at the Eleventh Congress of the organization in May 1970. In a struggle between them and the Forum Tendency there was "victory for the Trotskyists, which means that the Trotskyists in reality have taken over the political and organizational leadership of the sur. The name is changed from Socialistisk Ungdoms Forum to Socialistisk Ungdoms Forbund (League of Socialist Youth)."²⁹

In the autumn of 1970 the Trotskyists had a slight majority of the Central Committee of the sur. The minority members of the Central Committee then tried to stage a coup by registering some forty to fifty anti-Trotskyist members of the vs with the purpose of taking over the Copenhagen branch of the sur. The majority reaction to this maneuver was to expel the leaders of the minority.³⁰

At that point "only Trotskyists and their sympathizers were left in the sur." As a consequence, at its 12th Congress in January 1971 the organization decided to apply to the United Secretariat for admission as a "sympathizing" group. It broke all connection with the vs.³¹

Subsequent to the Trotskyists' taking control of the sur it was decided to merge the organization with the existing Trotskyist group. It took the name Revolutionaere Socialistisk Forbund (Revolutionary Socialist League—RSF).³²

There was an element among the Trotskyists who were opposed to breaking with the Left Socialists. Under the leadership of a one-time collaborator of Poul Moth, Vagn

Rasmussen, that group remained for more than a decade in the vs, continuing to use the name Revolutionaere Socialister.³³

The RSF began with "about seventy members, a good starting point for work in the 70s," according to a semiofficial report.³⁴

Danish Trotskyism in the 1970s

At that point Danish Trotskyism was overwhelmingly a student movement. The previously cited semi-official report said that "as far as the new members were concerned, they were mostly undergoing education and only had experience with political work from this milieu." Even with the working class members of the group "their political development had not taken place 'at the work place' but together with the rest of the members of the anti-imperialist and similar movements. They had no real experience of political work among their fellow workers or of traditional work in the trade unions. . . . They were not regarded as leaders at their work places and in their unions."³⁵

The Danish Trotskyists engaged in a number of different activities in this period. In November 1972 they organized a meeting celebrating the fortieth anniversary of Leon Trotsky's visit to Copenhagen.³⁶ They were active in the campaign against the Vietnam War.³⁷ They campaigned against Danish adhesion to the European Common Market.³⁸

The student background and inexperience of the young Danish Trotskyists led them into "very sectarian tendencies towards the majority of the working class and towards reformism. Instead of putting the method of the Transitional Program into practice, the RSF tried to make the Danish class struggle and the Danish working class fit its formulations."³⁹ As a consequence, "we reacted too late at the great decisive events in the Danish class struggle" during the 1970s. Thus "we were all the time behind events when we adopted and improved our politics and our propagandist methods."⁴⁰

From their position of being basically outside of the trade union movement, the

Trotskyists sought to organize "revolutionary trade union oppositions" under various names. Later, they described their experience with one of these groups, the Den Københavnske Arbejderopposition (Copenhagen Workers' Opposition—DKA). They said, "DKA was one of the greatest possibilities for the RSF in the period. At the collective bargaining strike in 1973 we called a meeting for workers who were dissatisfied with LO's bureaucratic way of running strikes. The meeting was a success, and on the basis of it DKA was formed and had, when it was at its height, fifty members. During the following [two] years it developed into a discussion club. . . . The RSF was never able to develop it into opposition work within the trade union movement. Eventually DKA died out." This report added that "Both in the political platform which we gave to . . . the DKA and in our independent propaganda the trade unions were absent. Instead, the RSF called upon the workers to form strike committees and workers' councils."⁴¹

In retrospect, the RSF leaders felt that they had not known how to make a correct and politically useful approach to the working class. They wrote that "we did not understand the necessity of a united front and of centralizing the struggle politically, i.e. for the necessity of the demand of a workers' government. . . . This fear of calling upon the reformist leaders to do something—and thereby create 'illusions'—was just like our strategy-propaganda linked to the model of party building which we had in common with the majority of the 4th International: to win the hegemony in the new mass avant garde which was composed of members and periphery of the 'extreme left.'⁴²

The lack of effectiveness of the Danish Trotskyists was not due to lack of activity. When in May 1974 massive strikes broke out in Copenhagen and elsewhere against the efforts of the minority bourgeois government to impose an "austerity" program, "activism was revived. Handbills were printed all day and all night and distributed in front of a lot of factory gates, especially

in the Copenhagen area. And once again the RSF demonstrated with the smartest and biggest banners."⁴³ But these efforts, apparently, produced very little concrete results for the RSF, and "the May strikes for the RSF were then just about nil."⁴⁴

Changes in the "Line" of the Danish Trotskyists

The strikes of May 1974 marked the beginning of a new wave of militancy in the organized labor movement. Consequently, the RSF/SAP 1980 Report noted that "this forced the RSF to take the trade unions seriously. An understanding of the fact that we had to work inside the trade unions began to make progress within the RSF. Similarly, we in this period gave up the sectarian line toward the leaders of the trade union movement. Instead of just writing them off as 'bureaucrats' and 'left bureaucrats,' we put demands to them to defend the interests of the working class."

Although seeking to orient their activities more toward the trade unions, the Danish Trotskyists did not want to abandon activities in other fields. The previously cited party report noted that "at the same time a number of movements outside the organized working class were still alive. The Chile Committee, the students movement, the women's movement, neighborhood actions. . . . Therefore, the conclusion of the internal discussions in the period was not a turn to the trade union movement but a *turn to the movements* in general. We gave up the barren propaganda line and tried to mobilize."⁴⁵

The internal discussion within the Trotskyist ranks continued for about two years, until the Third Congress of the RSF in February 1976. It involved not only Danish issues but the wider controversy then going on within the United Secretariat. The Danish Trotskyists had until then been aligned with the predominantly European International Majority Tendency (IMT) against that faction of USEC centering on the Socialist Workers party of the United States.

In this connection the group later noted that "this discussion dealt precisely with the orientation towards the organizations of the 'extreme left,' the lack of work in the trade union movement, sectarianism and propagandism, the lack of a slogan of a workers' government." The party's 1980 report added that "the leadership which belonged to the IMT was at a loss what to do. . . ." The upshot of the discussion was that "it was possible at the 3rd Congress to elect a Central Committee the majority of which had as its platform a showdown with the sectarian propaganda line and a turn to the movements. . . . Shortly after the 3rd Congress most of the old internal dividing lines were annihilated as a result of common practice and experience."⁴⁶

However, the adoption of an orientation toward work within the trade unions and other popular movements was not enough to assure rapid growth of the Danish Trotskyists. Michael Svendsen Pedersen has explained that there was "a situation where the members did not quite *feel* that they were actually members of the same party *in all respects*. If you, e.g., were active within the group of the party which was concerned with housing, you did not feel that this work could immediately be related to what happened in the party's women's group (that part of the party which was concerned with women's liberation). . . . We had a program in common, but in our daily political activities it was not always easy to relate *all* of your work to the rest of the party."⁴⁷ Discussions of appropriate ways of trying to build a party and to gain influence in the country's mass organizations dominated the discussions and decisions of the RSF's Fourth and Fifth congresses in 1977 and 1978.⁴⁸

One of the more important results of the RSF work in the movements of this period was a week-long national campaign against unemployment among women. In 1977 this campaign, arranged by dozens of women's groups throughout the country, drew thousands of women into political activities like demonstrations, marches, and meetings,

and had a clear impact on the attitude of larger organizations like the national trade union of the office and white-collar workers. The campaign was conceived, initiated and to a large extent organized and led by the women Trotskyists working within the women's liberation movement.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, Denmark was passing through an economic and political crisis. The impact of the dramatic rise of petroleum prices was felt in the country, and various attempts were made to reduce the real wages of the country's workers. This provoked a series of political crises, culminating in 1978-79 in a series of strikes against the formation of a coalition government by the Social Democrats with the Liberal Party. This led in 1979 to new elections which resulted in a parliament in which the Social Democrats and smaller left-wing parties had a majority.

During this period the RSF raised the slogan of formation of a "workers' government" of the Social Democrats and parties to the left of them. Given the Trotskyists lack of a base in the trade union movement, they were unable to develop wide support for this idea.

The consequence was a decision to "proletarianize" the Trotskyist movement. As the RSF/SAP 1980 Report noted, "The RSF/SAP had to turn drastically to industry, among other things through a quick proletarianization of a majority of its present members. . . . Our political line gave us the necessary faith in our political preparedness for carrying through the turn and the proletarianization. . . . The fact that the Eleventh World Congress of the 4th International furthermore carried the turn as an immediate task for the whole of the International gave us the final political support."⁵⁰

Trotskyist Factions

The Socialist Workers Party—SAP

In 1980 at its Seventh Congress the RSF decided to change its name to Socialistisk Ar-

bejderparti (Socialist Workers Party—SAP). As a report to the Congress noted, "This was to indicate that the League was now on its way to becoming a national party."⁵¹ By that time its membership had risen to "just under 200."⁵²

For the first time, in December 1981 the Trotskyists of SAP participated in general elections. In order to get on the ballot this required them to obtain signatures on petitions equivalent to the number of votes needed to elect a deputy in the previous election, which was between fifteen and twenty thousand. To elect four deputies, which was the minimum requirement for representation in parliament, it was necessary to get 2 percent of the total vote.⁵³

The SAP ran thirty-five candidates in the December 1981 election. They received a total of 2,034 votes, equivalent to 0.1 percent of all those cast.⁵⁴ In the following election two and a half years later, the party received 2,262 votes, which was again 0.1 percent of the total.⁵⁵

The SAP summed up its 1981 election platform under five points:

struggle against the attempted offensive of the bourgeois parties . . . that is, a struggle against the perspective of having a Danish 'Reagan-Thatcher government,' struggle for a workers government, a government composed of representatives of workers parties, to initiate a policy to defend the interests of the working population; a platform of the first initiatives that the workers parties in common should take to take up the struggle against unemployment, lowering of real wages and other consequences of the capitalist crisis and the austerity policy; indication of the [total] anticapitalist policy to solve the crisis in the interest of the working population, that is nationalisations of banks, big companies, socialist planned economy, etc., and Solidarity with Solidarnosc and the Polish workers, solidarity with the revolutionary struggles in Central

America, mobilization against imperialist rearmament, in particular against the deployment of nuclear missiles in Western Europe.⁵⁶

The Socialist Workers Party prepared a memorandum for a US&C European School in the summer of 1983 which provided interesting information on the state of the organization at that time. This reported that the party had 140 members. Of these, 27.9 percent belonged to the metal workers unions, of whom 17.2 percent had a job and 10.7 percent were unemployed. There were 22.3 percent of the members who were working in other parts of industry, 7.9 percent of whom were apprentices. Some 15 percent were in public employment.

The membership of the party was relatively young. It was reported that 43.6 percent were between twenty-five and thirty years of age, 28.6 percent were between thirty and forty. Some 26.4 percent of the members had been in the party a year or less, whereas 12.9 percent had been in the organization for more than ten years. Between 40 and 50 percent of the party members lived in Copenhagen, while 20 to 25 percent were in Århus, and there were additional branches in seven other cities and towns.⁵⁷

In November 1982 the SAP absorbed a group of about twenty Trotskyists who had stayed in vs when most had left it in 1971.⁵⁸

The Internationale Kommunisters Gruppe (IKG)

The quarrels of the 1970s within the ranks of the United Secretariat had their impact on Danish Trotskyism. As we have seen, they were one aspect in the discussions within the RSF during the mid-seventies. At the end of the 1970s they resulted in a split in the ranks of the organization.

Anton Schou Madsen, a leader of the dissident group which emerged from this con-

flict, has sketched the origins of his organization:

The internationally organized Leninist Trotskyist Faction supported by the SWP started a struggle in Denmark (as elsewhere inside the USEC) to solve the substantial problems in RSF . . . the beginning of a turn away from sectarianism was mainly a result of the fight of the Danish LTF, which became by far the biggest group at the third Congress, when it joined together with one of the tendencies in the RSF around a specific national platform. This meant a turn, but it was never completed . . . mainly because the SWP suddenly decided to support the dissolution of the LTF the same year.⁵⁹

Another participant in these events had a somewhat different memory of them. He has commented, "As I recall the platform—for the most part written by me—it was far from being 'specifically national.' On the contrary, it was very general and fairly abstract."

This same source added that the most prominent tendency in the Third Congress "had forty percent of the delegates—and . . . was a new tendency comprising the members of the two old tendencies plus several others, who had not taken a position until then. The LTF of Denmark never had more than twelve to fifteen members before it was dissolved."

Finally, this source has commented that "the dissolution of the international LTF was actually facilitated by the previous dissolution of tendencies in Denmark and the withering away of old antagonisms."⁶⁰

Madsen went on to describe the emergence of the IKC: "In 1978 some members of the RSF took up the fight to convince the rest of the organization that it had to develop along the line of the former LTF. This national tendency joined the revived international LT tendency during the discussions preparing the Eleventh World Congress of the USEC in 1979. The LT in Denmark ar-

gued against the formation of the SAP and the 'proletarianisation' line. . . . The IKC was formed by the expelled Danish LT. . . ."⁶¹

In 1979 when the Morenoists of USEC withdrew and joined forces temporarily with the Lambertist Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI) to form a Parity Committee, the Danish dissidents participated in that, which provoked their expulsion from the RSF. However, when that Parity Committee broke up and the Lambertists reorganized at an "Open and Democratic World Conference" in Paris under the name of Fourth International Centre for Reconstruction, the Danish group was represented, as the Internationale Kommunisters Gruppe (IKG).⁶²

According to Anton Schou Madsen:

The IKC aims at reinforcing and defending the proletarian world revolution at its two heights, the political revolution in Poland and the social revolution in Central America. The international solidarity work against Imperialism and Stalinism are at the center of the IKC's activities as the IKC fights for the workers' united front both at home and internationally against suppression in the East and the West.

IKC's method for rebuilding the revolutionary party is the strategy of the workers united front, and the IKC rejects all other methods as being short cuts and substitution methods . . . the IKC advances the demand for a united front consisting of all workers parties in order to unconditionally overthrow the bourgeois Schluter Government and in order to support unconditionally the Danish working class' efforts to make the Social Democratic Party and the SF form a majority workers government which breaks with the bourgeoisie and meets the demands of workers and youth.⁶³

The IKC began publishing a magazine, *Internationalen*. Through it and other media, it "makes propaganda for and agitates for the

formation of workers' majority committees which are to force through a coalition of the organizations of the working class. . . ." Among the slogans which it raised were "Down with NATO and the Warsaw Treaty," and "The United Socialist States of Europe."⁶⁴

*The Trotskistisk
Arbejderforbund (TAF)*

A third Trotskyist faction was founded in Denmark in the early 1980s. This was the Trotskistisk Arbejderforbund (Trotskyist Workers League—TAF), which was established "by a handful of comrades from various political currents."

One of the leaders of TAF has written that "the SAP and its international organization, the United Secretariat, lay claim to the Trotskyist tradition. But we consider the party to be only *part* of the depressed Trotskyist world movement, and we think that it has at its present stage written off the revolutionary method of the Trotskyist Transitional Program and adjusted itself to other forces [parts of the trade union bureaucracy, feminism, and the anti-nuclear movement . . .] which have anti-workers programs—and programs which are against the working class' political independence of the bourgeoisie."

The TAF joined the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, the so-called Thornett faction of International Trotskyism. Our informant has noted that the TAF's basis is the 1938 Transitional Program, and that

TAF's struggle to carry it into the workers movement and the trade unions takes its starting point in the decisive contradiction: the objective situation of decaying capitalism and a ripening of the revolutionary conditions, and . . . a historical crisis in the leadership of the working class which ties the masses politically to the bourgeoisie and hides the only prole-

tarian answer to the crisis of capitalism: the socialist revolution! [It presents] a system of transitional demands that take their starting point in the immediate problems and consciousness of the working class, and in their consequences lead to the final conclusion: the working class' conquering of power through a social revolution—and the working class' conquering and reconquering soviet democracy through a political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers' states.

The TAF issued a magazine, *Trotskistisk synspunkt* (Trotskyist Viewpoint).⁶⁵

The International Socialist Tendency

One other group with its origin in International Trotskyism also has had representation in Denmark. This is the "state capitalist" International Socialism Tendency, allied with the Socialist Workers Party of Great Britain. The SAP reported in mid-1983 that they had had some contacts with the Faglig Faelles Liste (Trade Union Common List), "which is the tendency with some connections with the British SWP, that is 'with some connections' as opposed to simply being a SWP-tendency in vs. They are 'militant, revolutionary minded,' but traditionally sectarian, when it comes to the question of united front, and syndicalist/economistic, that is they are politically weak in a situation where it is important to put forward a rounded political alternative to the line of the government and of the Socialdemocrats. . . ."⁶⁶

This Danish group was represented at the conference of the International Socialist Tendency in Great Britain in September 1984. At that meeting "the session on centrism was taken up with the discussion of the Danish comrades and hammering them to split from the centrist group . . . the Left Socialists, which they are members of. It was useful as it helped further clarify the questions of firstly the need to sharply dif-

ferentiate your politics and secondly the need for the highest possible level of political clarity. It also made an impact on the Danes, some of whom eventually agreed to split to form an explicitly is group."⁶⁷

Trotskyism in the Dominican Republic

Pierre Naville, in his report to the Founding Congress of the Fourth International concerning groups then affiliated with it, lists "Bolshevik-Leninists" of the Dominican Republic.¹ The actual existence of any kind of Trotskyist organization in the Dominican Republic in 1938 seems highly unlikely since the country was controlled then by the exceedingly tyrannical and sanguinary dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo.

It was in fact not until 1982 that the first party more or less aligned with International Trotskyism, the Movimiento por el Socialismo (MPS), was established in the Dominican Republic. In the following year, after "a sector which maintained an opportunist policy of class collaboration" broke away, the MPS decided to join the Morenoist tendency of International Trotskyism. The MPS leaders officially reported that "in the meeting of last February 25-26 the Central Committee decided to accept positively the proposal to adhere to the International Workers League (Fourth International), and to propose that to the Organization for its final decision at the Fourth National Conference to meet May 4-6."² The MPS was accepted as a "section" at the March 1985 World Congress of the Morenoist group.³

Another organization in the Dominican Republic, the Bloque Socialista, developed relations in the early 1980s with the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. However, there is no indication available that the Bloque Socialista formally declared itself to be Trotskyist, or that it sought affiliation with the United Secretariat.

Ecuadorean Trotskyism

As early as 1934 an effort was made to establish a Trotskyist organization in Ecuador. However, there is no indication of the name of this group, and apparently it was short-lived.¹ It was not until the early 1970s that a more long-lasting Trotskyist movement was finally established in the South American republic, and even then Trotskyism in the country remained very small and without any significant impact on general politics or even on the politics of the left.

The first Trotskyist group to be organized in this period was the Partido Obrero Revolucionario, associated with the Posadas faction of International Trotskyism, established in 1971. It began to publish *Lucha Comunista* as its official organ.² *Lucha Comunista* was still appearing early in 1975. The February 1975 issue, as was the custom with Posadista publications, carried a long article by J. Posadas. It also had a long editorial entitled "Push the Anti-imperialist United Front and the general strike defending workers' conquests." An article in the periodical was devoted to a forthcoming congress of the Communist-controlled Confederación de Trabajadores del Ecuador. It urged that "the Congress of the CTE must approve a program to struggle for the statization of the principal industries and public services of the country under workers control . . ." ³

The Posadista version of the Fourth International still reported late in 1976 that the Ecuadorean Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista) was publishing *Lucha Comunista*.⁴ There is no information available as to whether the Posadista Ecuadorean party survived the death of Posadas in mid-1981.

Another Trotskyist party appeared in Ecuador early in 1978. This was the Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores,

which published a periodical *El Trabajador Socialista* and was a sympathizing organization of the United Secretariat. The first issue of the paper appeared in February 1978 and its lead editorial said: "Perhaps you already know us. The Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores is a young political organization that includes workers, artisans, professionals, peasants, women and students who have the goal of a new Ecuador—a socialist Ecuador where neither oppression nor poverty in any form would exist. The MST and its newspaper *El Trabajador Socialista* identify with the positions of the Fourth International, a world organization that unites socialist and workers parties of the five continents." It also called on the workers to nominate their own candidates in forthcoming elections.⁵

With the 1979 split in the United Secretariat, the MST of Ecuador went with the Moreno faction. They became the Ecuadorean affiliate of the International Workers League (Fourth International).⁶

Egyptian Trotskyism

A Trotskyist movement appeared in Egypt sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s. At its inception at least it consisted mainly of ex-Communists.¹ The Israeli Trotskyist leader Michel Warshawski reported early in 1985 that in Egypt "there are lots of Communist parties, with one of these Communist parties there is quite good collaboration" between it and the local Trotskyist group.² In January 1985, of thirty leftists arrested and brought to trial by the government of President Hosni Mubarak nineteen were reported to be members of "a Trotskyist Communist organization."³

It was later reported that the government's persecution of the Trotskyist group, the Revolutionary Communist League, "had several aims. One aim was to repress those who could be considered the most dynamic and influential members of these communist currents. Another aim was to thwart the rcl's attempts to build its strength in view of the struggles expected to break out in the near future. Another was to determine its organizational scope."⁴ The Revolutionary Communist League was apparently associated with the United Secretariat, although we have no information as to whether it was formally a part of USEC.

Trotskyism in El Salvador

Trotskyism first made an appearance in El Salvador in mid-1979, perhaps as a reflection of the revolution in neighboring Nicaragua and the tangential participation of Trotskyists in that event. The Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST) was established as an affiliate of the Morenoite tendency of International Trotskyism, the International Workers League (Fourth International).

The PST immediately became involved in the guerrilla war then occurring in El Salvador. It was reportedly established "by a small group of union activists." A Morenoist source claimed that "the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores . . . is the only organization that clearly calls for Socialism and the formation of a Workers and Peasant Government as the only way for the Central American Revolution."¹ The PST was said to publish a newspaper, *Avanzada Socialista*.

Finnish Trotskyism

Few data are available on the Trotskyist movement in Finland. Livio Maitan has written that "in Finland there never was a section of the FI. There was a very small group for a certain period."¹

Douglas Jenness, editor of *Intercontinental Press*, has noted that between 1963 and 1971 a Trotskyist paper *Luokkatsistelu* was published in Finland, and added that "At least seventeen issues were published during those eight years." Subsequently, another Finnish Trotskyist periodical *Neuvostovalta* (*Soviet Power*) was published. Of it Jenness noted that "the earliest issue . . . that I located was dated 1975. Other issues appeared in 1976, 1977 and two issues in 1978."²

Neuvostovalta was succeeded by another paper, *Tyovaenvalta* (*Workers Power*), which was published in Tampere.³ Jenness has noted that at least three issues of that paper appeared in 1978 and one in 1979.⁴

We have no information available concerning the names of the groups which put out those periodicals, or very much concerning the activities of those groups. It is known, however, that in 1978 the Finnish Trotskyists were carrying on a strong campaign against the installation of nuclear power plants in Finland.⁵

Fomento Obrero Revolucionario

The Fomento Obrero Revolucionario (FOR) was an international grouping with its roots in Trotskyism which grew out of divergences of G. Munis, one-time leader of the Spanish section of the Fourth International, with the leaders of the FI during World War II. Munis and his followers broke with the International after its Second Congress in 1948. Although Munis and his followers carried on extensive polemics against the FI in subsequent years, it was not until the late 1970s that they formed a formal international organization. At its height the FOR included the Alarma group in Spain (with a branch in Paris), FOCUS of the United States, Allarme Group in Italy, and Synagernos group of Greece.¹

The FOR held only one international conference, in Paris in January 1981. That meeting was marked by a split between the "interior" Spanish group supported by the FOR Organizing Committee (FOCUS) of the United States, on the one hand, and the two groups in Paris (French and Spanish) led by G. Munis, on the other. Subsequently, the Spanish interior section virtually disappeared and FOCUS was expelled from the Fomento Obrero Revolucionario.²

Munis and his associates developed "extreme left" positions which were substantially at variance with traditional Trotskyism, although they never repudiated their Trotskyist origins. These positions were summed up by an editorial in the journal of the Spanish section of FOR in 1981:

denounce the capitalist system, whatever its apparent form of government, as a system based on the exploitation of man by man; denounce the so-called socialist countries, they are state capitalist coun-

tries; support of communism as the only social system capable of saving humanity from its destruction in capitalist barbarism; denounce the vulgar character of nationalism and of false 'struggles of national liberation' as alienation of the working class and contrary to its interests as a social class without fatherlands or frontiers; denounce parliamentarianism, political parties and their trade union appendices, as elements of social exploitation and basic pillars of the capitalist system; affirmation in this moment of the total decadence of the system, of the inevitable necessity of the communist revolution on a world scale.³

Fourth International: From International Left Opposition to Movement for the Fourth International

Leon Trotsky had hardly begun his last exile before he started efforts to bring together on an international basis his followers in various countries. While he was still living in the Soviet consulate in Istanbul Trotsky entered into epistolary contact with some of his friends in Western and Central Europe.

There was no lack of individuals and groups who were—or thought they were—loyal to the person and ideas of Leon Trotsky. These were people who had left the official Communist movement at various times and under various circumstances (and there were even some who were still members of the official Communist parties). Once Leon Trotsky was forced into exile these heterogeneous people immediately turned to him for guidance, for encouragement, or for self-aggrandizement or a combination of all of these things.

Alfred Rosmer, writing to Trotsky about France, might also have been describing the situation in several other countries. He observed that "your banishment has made all of the opposition groups come out of the lethargy more or less characteristic of all of them, and all, or nearly all, present themselves as the true champions of your ideas. . . . The great difficulty with all the opposition groups is that they find themselves apart from all action and thus their sectarian character has been fatally accentuated. . . ."

Rosmer concluded that "it is only with the establishment of a general platform that it will be possible to emerge from the present difficulties and give the opposition a cohesion indispensable for its development

and action."¹ This was exactly what Trotsky set about trying to do.

The Early Role of the Rosmers

People from many different countries entered into correspondence with Trotsky soon after his arrival in Turkey. Some of these he had known in the past during his earlier exiles or during the early years of the Soviet regime. Others were people about whom he knew little. Still others had been his opponents in the past, but changing circumstances had made them allies or would-be allies of the exiled Soviet leader.

During his struggle within the Soviet Party after 1923 Trotsky had had relatively little contact with supporters outside of the Soviet Union. Pierre Frank has noted:

The Left Opposition in the CPSU . . . had not organically aligned with the different oppositions which were formed in the same years (1923 to 1927) within the different Communist parties. These oppositions were far from having common political bases. . . . The opposition which, in different Communist parties, fought against the mounting bureaucratic regime and published the documents of the Soviet Opposition which came into their hands, had been formed during different stages of the crisis of the Communist International and its sections around different national and international problems, and they presented a heterogeneous political character: there were even in certain countries several oppositional groups which were fighting one another. These groups had only the remotest relations with the Soviet Opposition, and that amounted only to the exchange of publications or of documents.²

Under these circumstances Trotsky turned in the first instance particularly to his old friends and comrades-in-arms, Alfred and Marguerite Rosmer, for advice and help. In their early letters to Trotsky in Turkey

the Rosmers tried to sort out the various oppositionist groups which existed in France. They also very early helped to put Trotsky in contact with oppositionists with whom they themselves had been associated in Luxemburg and Belgium.³

In July 1929 Alfred Rosmer made a trip to Austria and Germany to meet with groups and individuals there who had proclaimed themselves to be followers of Trotsky, and had had correspondence with him. He wrote to Trotsky about his impressions of Landau, Frey and other factions and individuals in Austria, and of the Leninbund, Hugo Urbahns, and those opposed to Urbahns in Germany.

One of the purposes of Rosmer's travels was to muster support for a periodical which could not only serve as an official organ of the French followers of Trotsky but could be an official mouthpiece for the embryonic international Trotskyist movement. It could clearly put forth the ideological positions of Trotsky and differentiate them from those of other oppositionist groups which might have thought themselves to be Trotskyist but in fact did not hold with the ideas which Trotsky felt were the correct positions on a wide range of issues.

This publication, the first number of which appeared soon after Rosmer's return from Austria and Germany, was *La Verité*. Trotsky had confided the task of bringing out such a journal principally to Rosmer, and in the beginning at least Rosmer had apparently hoped to have it appear in at least two languages, French and German. In fact, it appeared only in French.⁴

Trotsky himself, in a letter dated March 31, 1929, defined the "three classic questions which provide a decisive criterion allowing one to understand the tendencies existing in world Communism." These questions were "1. the policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee; 2. the course followed in the Chinese revolution; 3. the economic policy in the USSR together with the theory of socialism in one country."⁵

Trotsky went on to add a characteristic observation: "Certain comrades will be surprised perhaps that I do not mention here the question of the internal regime of the party. I act thus not to forget the issue, but quite consciously. The existing regime in the party has no importance of its own, is of no value in itself. It is a factor which derives from the policy of the party. The most heterogeneous elements have sympathy for the struggle against Stalinist bureaucracy."⁶

Pierre Frank has noted that "in this letter and in other documents that followed shortly thereafter, Trotsky distinguished three fundamental currents in the Communist International. . . ." These were, said Frank, "[a] *The Left Opposition*, which defended the fundamental political and organizational policies of Leninism advocated by the Bolshevik-Leninists in the Soviet Union. (b) *The Right Opposition*, oriented by the right wing of the Bolshevik Party (Bukharin) and composed of groups opposed to Stalinism, not because of its fundamental policy, not on the question of 'socialism in one country,' but more particularly because of its 'ultra-left' errors. . . . In the centre, *the Stalinist faction*, the bureaucratic wing in the service of the Kremlin."⁷

The Founding Meeting of the International Left Opposition

Once *La Verité* was being published Leon Trotsky became increasingly impatient to have the next step taken: the establishment of an international organization which could coordinate the activities of the various national left Communist groups and provide a regular means of exchanging information and ideas among them. He particularly pressed this idea on Alfred Rosmer. Thus, writing to Rosmer on October 13, 1929, he says, "I have already written you my opinion of the necessity for the provisional committee (or perhaps information bureau—a more modest and therefore wiser title) to present itself to the various groups and begin its

work." He sent a draft of a circular letter calling for the establishment of such a body, suggesting that it be signed by G. Gourov (a pseudonym of Trotsky), Alfred Rosmer and the Belgian War van Overstraeten. Trotsky was particularly anxious for action because of rumors that Hugo Urbahns and Maurice Paz, who had recently broken with him, were about to take a similar step.⁸

However, no action was taken at that time. Two months later, on December 13, Trotsky again wrote Rosmer about the issue. He commented that "the creation of an international center, however modest it may be, is very urgent, for France as well as for the other countries."⁹

It was not until April 6, 1930, that the first international meeting of Trotskyists took place and the International Left Opposition was formally established. The French Ligue Communiste (Opposition), Communist League of America, Unified Opposition of the German Communist Party, Opposition Group of the Belgian Communist Party, the Spanish Opposition, the Czechoslovakian Left Opposition, the Hungarian Communist Opposition, and the Jewish Opposition Group of Paris were represented by delegates at this meeting in Paris.¹⁰ Among those attending were Max Shachtman from the United States, Alfred Rosmer and Pierre Naville of France, Julián Gorkin from Spain, the German Oscar Seipold, Leon Lesoil and Adhémar Hennaut from Belgium, Jan Frankel from Czechoslovakia, Szilvaczi from Hungary, and Obin-Mill from the Paris Jewish group.¹¹

This meeting elected an International Secretariat, presumably to carry on the activities of the new organization. It also agreed that there should be a bulletin issued regularly in which "the texts published will be of two kinds. On the one hand will be information sent by all the groups. . . . The other part will be discussion articles, looking towards the preparation of the conference, the elaboration of a political platform."¹²

The April 6 meeting also adopted two documents. One was a short message "sending warm greetings and testimony of close solidarity to the Bolshevik comrades, imprisoned and deported, and to their exiled leader, L. D. Trotsky."¹³ The second document was a "Call to the Proletarians of the World."

This call was the first official doctrinary and programmatic statement of International Trotskyism. It began by noting "the profound social and political crises" developing in the various capitalist countries. It observed that "only the revolutionary movement, with the proletarian party, thanks to the teachings of Marx and of Lenin, lead the proletariat to its liberation, thus creating the bases of the new society which will liberate all humanity." However, the document noted that "a profound crisis presently ravages the Communist International."¹⁴

A substantial part of the "Call" was devoted to this crisis. It observed that it "is in large part a reflection and a direct consequence of the crisis which is taking place in the Russian Communist Party and in all the Soviet Union." It then developed what was to become the classic Trotskyist explanation for that crisis: "principally the weakness of the Occidental proletarian revolution in the years immediately following the imperialist war. . . . The USSR could not alone liquidate the society divided into classes or construct socialism. It could only defend the bases of a society against the whole of the capitalist world until the proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries comes to its aid."

However, "after the death of Lenin, after the heavy defeats suffered in Germany, in Bulgaria, and in Estonia, the Soviet Union entered a period of social and political reaction, in the party and in the country as a whole. It was in that epoch that, ignoring the course of the international revolution, there was crystallized the theory of socialism in one country."¹⁵ The document went on to proclaim that "every attempt to carry

out a program of proletarian dictatorship and of liquidation of the capitalist class on the basis of the theory of socialism in one country is bound to fail."

The conclusion of this part of the April 1930 document was that "the International Left Opposition says openly to the conscious workers of the entire world that the Soviet Union, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Communist International, the vanguard of the working class, are in danger, that the regime dominant in Russia and the International are moving towards catastrophe. All the Communist militants, the revolutionary combatants, must join the Left Opposition to retrieve the flag of Bolshevism."¹⁶

This statement of the Paris meeting made it clear that they were not establishing a new International. Quite to the contrary, "the moral and political heritage of the International of Lenin is firmly asserted by the International Left Opposition. It cannot be seized from it."¹⁷ This point was reiterated near the end of the statement: "Thanks to the tradition of the revolution of October, official Communism, regardless of its enfeeblement, still brings together in many countries the most active part of the working class. That is why the opposition rejects the idea of a second party and a fourth international. It considers itself a fraction with the objective of rehabilitating the Communist International, on the true basis of Marx and of Lenin. For the same reasons it can never be separated from the activity of the proletarian vanguard."¹⁸

Subsequent to the Paris meeting, nine other groups expressed their support of the new International Left Opposition, bringing the total at that time to seventeen. These were the Russian Opposition, the Communist Opposition of Austria and the Austrian Communist Party (Opposition), the Communist Opposition Committee of Argentina, the Brazilian Lenin Communist Committee in Exile, the Archeiomarxists of Greece, the Italian Left Fraction and the

New Opposition of the Italian Communist Party, and the Communist Opposition of Mexico.¹⁹

The April 1930 meeting established an International Bureau consisting of Alfred Rosmer and Pierre Naville (as Rosmer's deputy), Max Shachtman, Kurt Landau of Germany (an Austrian), Andrés Nin, and Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, who used the pseudonym Markin. This bureau was largely ineffectual because Shachtman returned to the United States, Andrés Nin was soon jailed in Spain, Alfred Rosmer withdrew from Trotskyist activities later in 1930, and Sedov-Markin was unable to get to Paris from Istanbul.²⁰

The International Secretariat (is) which was also named was slightly more successful. Pierre Naville was the most reliable member of the is. He was at first aided by an Italian named Suzo and by Obin-Mill, who in 1932 was disclosed as a Stalinist. Trotsky then relied on the Sobolevich brothers to reorganize the Secretariat, but they were also Stalinist agents and quite spectacularly "went over" to the Stalinist side in 1933. They were then working with Sedov, who had been able to establish his headquarters and a part of the International Secretariat in Berlin until the Hitler regime came to power.²¹

One thing the International Secretariat did succeed in doing was issuing more or less regularly *The International Bulletin of the Left Opposition*. It first appeared in French and English, and in early 1931 the Communist League of America (Opposition) announced that the English-language version of the periodical would be issued regularly under its aegis.²²

Attempt at International Organization by Trotskyist Dissidents

Some of those people in various countries who had sought to join forces with Trotsky during the first year or so of his exile, but who then broke with him, also tried to es-

tablish an international organization. George Breitman has noted that "in 1931 and 1932, forces that had split from the ILO tried to put together a new international center in competition with the is. They received tolerance and even sympathy from some of the anti-is people still in the ILO." Breitman notes that "the effort finally failed because the only thing the dissidents had in common was a distaste for the 'methods' of Trotsky and the is, and because the main cadres of the ILO rallied around Trotsky and the is in 1932."²³ The effort to organize a kind of "International Trotskyism without Trotsky" thus came to naught.

Leon Trotsky's Visit to Copenhagen

Trotsky never attended any of the meetings, preconferences, or conferences of his followers leading up to the establishment of the Fourth International, nor did he take part in the Founding Conference. Virtually the only time he met with a substantial number of his followers from several different countries at the same time, and to exchange views with them at some length, was in November 1932 in Copenhagen. Trotsky had been invited by the Social Democratic Youth group of Denmark to come to the Danish capital and deliver a lecture on the Russian Revolution. The Social Democratic government in power at the time, to avoid political embarrassment, could not turn down this request and issued visitors' visas to Trotsky and his wife. This was in spite of official *démarches* (according to Trotsky himself) by Soviet embassies in both Denmark and Sweden against such action. The Danish government turned down Trotsky's request that he and his wife be allowed to stay in Denmark a few weeks beyond his lecture, for medical treatment.²⁴

The Soviet news agency Tass broadcast a report that during his stay in Copenhagen Trotsky had participated in a "Trotskyite international conference." There was in fact no such "conference." There was a small

gathering of Trotsky's supporters and he explained the occasion for this: "My friends in various countries of Europe were extremely worried by the campaign in the European reactionary press. They saw this campaign in connection with the recent disclosures in the left press about the terrorist act being prepared against me. . . . Some two dozen of my co-thinkers arrived from the six countries nearest Denmark. After the completely peaceful outcome of my talk, they all went home, apart from one or two who decided to accompany me back."²⁵

There were twenty-seven people in all who came to Copenhagen to meet, protect, and talk with Trotsky. There were ten Germans—O. Fischer, A. Grylewicz, O. Hippe, H. Schneeweiss, J. Schoffmann, B. Weinberg, G. Jungclas, E. Kohn, C. Hunter, and K. Stortenbecker; eight Frenchmen—Pierre and Denise Naville, Gerard Rosenthal, Jeanne Martin, Jean Meichler, Robert Buren, Raymond Molinier, and Pierre Frank; three Italians—Pietro Tresso, Lucienne Tedeschi, and Alfonso Leonetti, Hendrik Sneevliet of the Netherlands, Jan Frankel of Czechoslovakia, Harry Wicks of Great Britain, Leon Lesoil of Belgium, and B. J. and Esther Field of the United States. The last two were reported as being present "in a personal capacity."

Although this meeting was in no sense a formal conference, Rodolphe Prager has noted that they "amply debated the themes that would be dealt with in the 'Eleven Points.'" Trotsky commented when the session was over that "the unforeseen, improvised meeting of two dozen Bolshevik-Leninists, from seven European countries, will be considered an important accomplishment in the history of our international fraction."²⁶

The "Pre-Conference" of February 1933

The next meeting of the International Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists) took place in Paris from February 4-8, 1933. It had the peculiar designation of a "pre-conference,"

having as it did, presumably, the task of preparing the ground for a full-blown conference to be held later in the year.

The Pre-Conference of February 1933 was of peculiar importance in the history of International Trotskyism. It not only brought a reorganization of the apparatus of the group and reviewed its progress in a number of countries, but, most importantly it set forth a series of "Eleven Points" that were largely to constitute the ideological and programmatic basis of International Trotskyism for the next half century:

According to a report on the Pre-Conference which appeared in *La Verité* on February 16, 1933, there were delegates present at the meeting from the Russian, German, French, Belgian, Greek, Bulgarian, British, Italian, Swiss, Spanish, and American sections. In addition, "others sent their adherence" to the meeting.²⁷

The meeting adopted several documents in addition to the Eleven Points. One was an "Appeal to the members of the German Communist Party, to the Social Democratic Workers, to the German Proletariat," calling for the establishment of a united front immediately in Germany to face the menace represented by the coming of Hitler to power a few days earlier.²⁸

Another document was a telegram sent to the Comintern, which read: "In face gravity German situation and menaces against USSR, demand urgent convocation world congress Communist International with participation International Left Opposition. Invite Comintern propose United Front to organizations LSI, RILU, IFTU for common action German and international proletariat against German fascism, for defense USSR."²⁹ Needless to say, the Trotskyists received no answer.

In addition, the Pre-Conference took steps which were presumably to lead both to a more efficient organization, and to preparation for a full-scale world conference of the movement. It established a plenum of the organization, composed of the delegates from the German, French Belgian, Greek,

and Russian sections, which would supervise a new secretariat, which was also named and would have the power to change the membership of the secretariat.

In preparation for the world conference the Pre-Conference submitted the document containing the Eleven Points as the basis for discussion among the national sections. The sections were instructed to spend four weeks in such discussion and to submit thereafter any changes they might suggest. The sections were also invited to submit by April 15 other theses to be discussed at the world meeting, which it was announced would take place in July.³⁰ The conference did not actually meet until three years after the date it was originally scheduled.

The Pre-Conference also sought to define as carefully as possible just who would be invited to the coming world conference. The same document containing the Eleven Points noted that "the last four years were for the International Left Opposition a time not only of clarification and deepening of theory but also of its cleansing of alien, sectarian, and adventurist bohemian elements, without a principled position, without serious devotion to the cause, without connection with the masses, without a sense of responsibility and discipline, and for that all the more inclined to listen to the voice of careerism. . . ."

As a consequence of this, the document said, "The proposal to call a conference with each and every group that counts itself in the Left Opposition [the groups of Landau and Rosmer, the Mahruf, Spartakos, the Weisbord group, etc.] represents an attempt to turn the wheel backward and shows a complete lack of understanding of the conditions and laws of development of a revolutionary organization. . . . The preconference not only rejects but condemns such an attitude as being in radical contradiction to the organizational policies of Marxism."³¹

The Eleven Points

The document containing the Eleven Points, which summed up the position of

International Trotskyism, was entitled "The International, Its Tasks and Methods." It had been completed by Trotsky in December 1932, shortly after his return to Prinkipo from the visit to Copenhagen.³² The Eleven Points were contained in a section of that document entitled "Fundamental Principles of the Left Opposition." That section began by stating that "the International Left Opposition stands on the ground of the first four congresses of the Comintern . . . all the essential principles (in relation to imperialism and the bourgeois state, to democracy and reformism, problems of insurrection, the dictatorship of the proletariat, on relations with the peasantry and the oppressed nations, soviets, work in the trade unions, parliamentarism, the policy of the united front) remain even today the highest expression of proletarian strategy in the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism." The eleven essential elements of Trotskyism were then stated. Since they included what was to remain its basic program, they are worthy of extensive quotation:

1. *The independence of the proletarian party, always and under all conditions . . . condemnation of the Stalinist theory of two-class [worker and peasant] parties and of the whole practice based on this theory. . . .*
2. *Recognition of the international and thereby of the permanent character of the proletarian revolution; rejection of the theory of socialism in one country. . . .*
3. *Recognition of the Soviet state as a workers' state in spite of the growing degeneration of the bureaucratic regime; and unconditional obligation of every worker to defend the Soviet state against imperialism as well as against international counterrevolution.*
4. *Condemnation of the economic policy of the Stalinist faction both in its stage of economic opportunism of 1923 to 1928 [struggle against 'superindustrialization,' staking all on the kulaks] as well as in its stage of economic adventurism in 1928*

to 1932. . . . condemnation of the criminal bureaucratic legend that 'the Soviet state has already entered into socialism.' . . .

5. Recognition of the necessity of systematic Communist work in the proletarian mass organizations, particularly in the reformist trade unions; condemnation of the theory and practice of the Red trade union organization. . . .

6. Rejection of the formula of the 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' as a separate regime distinguished from the dictatorship of the proletariat, which wins the support of the peasant and the oppressed masses in general; rejection of the anti-Marxist theory of the peaceful 'growing-over' of the democratic dictatorship into the socialist one.

7. Recognition of the necessity to mobilize the masses under *transitional slogans* corresponding to the concrete situation in each country, and particularly under *democratic slogans* insofar as it is a question of a struggle against feudal relations, national oppression, or different varieties of openly imperialistic dictatorship (fascism, Bonapartism, etc.)

8. Recognition of the necessity of a developed *united front policy* with respect to the mass organizations of the working class, both of trade union and political character. . . .

9. Rejection of the theory of *social fascism* and of the entire practice bound up with it as serving fascism on the one hand and the Social Democracy on the other.

10. Differentiation of *three groupings* within the camp of communism: the Marxist, the centrist, and the right; recognition of the impermissibility of a political alliance with the right against centrism; support of centrism against the class enemy; irreconcilable and systematic struggle against centrism and its zigzag policies.

11. Recognition of *party democracy* not only in words but also in fact. . . .³³

Some of the Eleven Points were directed specifically against the Third Period policies of the Stalinist Comintern—the theory of social fascism, opposition to united fronts, dual unionism—and therefore became more or less moot issues once the Stalinists had changed their "line." However, none of the eleven positions enunciated here was ever repudiated by Trotsky or his followers, and only the tenth was substantially modified.

The points concerning the "independence of the proletarian party," the "permanent" nature of the revolution, recognition of the USSR as a workers' state, rejection of the idea of a "democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants," and the necessity for "transitional" slogans continued to be the essence of Trotskyism. Many if not most of the bitter internecine quarrels among the Trotskyites during the next half-century centered to a greater or less degree on allegations that one faction or the other was breaking either in theory or practice with one or more of these doctrinal positions.

What might have been regarded as a "twelfth point," although it was not listed as such in the document, was repudiated soon after the February 1933 meeting. This was the statement that "the International left Opposition regards itself as a faction of the Comintern and its separate national sections as factions of the national Communist parties. This means that the Left Opposition does not regard the organizational regime created by the Stalinist bureaucracy as final. On the contrary, its aim is to tear the banner of Bolshevism out of the hands of the usurping bureaucracy and return the Communist International to the principles of Marx and Lenin. . . ."³⁴

The August 1933 Plenum

The world conference of the International Left opposition planned for July 1933 never took place. However, there were two plenum meetings, in May and August 1933, which marked a fundamental change in the

strategic orientation of the international Trotskyist movement. They followed the evolution of Trotsky's thinking concerning the strategy which he and his followers should follow in the light of the complete collapse of the mighty German Communist Party in the face of the advent to power of the Nazis, and the refusal of the Soviet leadership and the Comintern not only to recognize that they had erred in the policies they had dictated to the German party but also, on the contrary, to continue to insist that their policies had been entirely correct.

The May 1933 Plenum of the International Left Opposition adopted a resolution calling, as had Trotsky, for the establishment of a new Communist Party in Germany.³⁵ The following meeting, three months later, took the much more drastic step of calling for the establishment of a new international, and new Communist parties in every country.

Two actions of the August Plenum set forth this fundamental change of strategy. One was a modification of point ten of the Eleven Points. Another was passage of a resolution entitled "The International Opposition and the Communist International." A third move, an alteration in the name of the Trotskyist international organization, was taken at a subsequent plenum in September 1933.

According to *La Verité* of September 8, 1933, the August Plenum decided to change point ten, which originally had dealt with the three factions of the Comintern, to read as follows: "Struggle for regroupment of the revolutionary forces of the world working class under the banner of internationalist communism. Recognition of the necessity to create a true Communist International capable of applying the principles already enumerated."³⁶

The resolution which extensively set forth the change in strategic direction, "the International Opposition and the Communist International," first noted the earlier decision to support formation of a new Com-

munist party in Germany, and traced the "degeneration" of the Comintern and its member parties since the death of Lenin. It then proclaimed that "The force of facts imposes upon us a new orientation. . . . From now on," the resolution went on, "we must envisage all the possibilities of rapprochement and collaboration with the revolutionary forces which, after the German catastrophe, begin to detach themselves from the influence of the Communist International directed by the Stalinists and of the Second International, and which orient towards a Communist movement founded on the principles formulated by the first congresses of the CI and upon the experience acquired in the Communist movement since the death of Lenin. . . ."³⁷

A major part of the resolution set forth five answers to the question "How to constitute this new international?" The first point was "to consider ourselves as the embryo of the true Communist party; to establish in each section our very extensive action program. . . ." Perhaps presaging the "French turn" to be shortly undertaken, this point called for "directing our principal fire against the influence of the social democracy . . . tending to attract the workers attached to the party by real action against the bourgeoisie and its valets."³⁸

The second answer to the question of how to bring about the new international called for the Trotskyists to build up counterparts of the "front groups" of the Comintern, using as a specific example the International Red Aid.³⁹ The third was to emphasize the point that "the reconstitution of a party in the USSR and the reinforcement of the revolutionary proletariat in the world around a revolutionary International are decisive factors in the defense of the Workers State."

The fourth tactical point of the resolution claimed, "Our present forces acting as the embryo of a Communist Party, through their political cohesion, their success in activity in the organizations of the working class, the resulting experience, can exercise

an important attraction on the other currents of the workers movement, ejected from the Third or the Second International, which are evolving towards Communist positions. Our attractive power will be much greater because our position as a fraction will no longer exist as a barrier between these currents and us."⁴⁰ This part of the document went on to warn that the proposed new international would not be "between" the Second and Third, but rather based on the positions of the first four congresses of the Comintern, "abandoned by the CI," which have been "enriched by the experience of the last ten years"; and on "the eleven points of the preconference" of the International Left Opposition.⁴¹

Finally, the document argued that "with the basis of political agreements with existing groups thus defined, the Left Opposition must understand the historic interest represented by the international realignment of these groups currently dispersed, which, without well defined principles, without organic links, could in the present chaos degenerate or be subjected to exterminating maneuvers of the Stalinists."⁴²

Conforming to their new orientation as a group quite separate from the Comintern, the Trotskyist September 1933 Plenum decided to change the name of their organization, adopting the title Internationalist Communist League [Bolshevik-Leninists].⁴³

The Declaration of the Four

In launching the idea of forming a new international Leon Trotsky and his followers clearly thought at first in terms of the possibility of uniting under their banner a diverse group of parties which over the previous few years had broken away from either the Communist or Socialist International. The parties involved were a very heterogeneous group.

On the one hand, there were dissident Socialist parties including the Independent Labor Party, which had just recently withdrawn from its long affiliation with the

British Labor Party, and the Norwegian Labor Party, which after a short affiliation with the Comintern in the early 1920s had maintained itself as an independent leftist social democratic organization—and with neither of which the Trotskyists wanted anything to do. There was also the Socialist Labor Party (SAP), which had broken away from the German Social Democrats shortly before the triumph of Hitler and had been joined by a substantial part of the German Communist Right Opposition. There was also the Swedish Communist Party, the only national party which in its majority had broken with the Comintern to join the Right Opposition, but which by 1933 was on the way to abandoning that group. Another element more or less aligned with the Right Opposition was the Bloque Obrero y Campesino of Spain, led by Joaquín Maurín, which also maintained contacts with the ILP, SAP, and similar groups. Finally, there were the two Dutch parties, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), a dissident Communist group led by Hendrik Sneevliet, and the Independent Socialist Party (ISP) which had recently broken with the Social Democrats.

A number of these groups had participated in a congress in April 1932 which established an organization widely known by its German initials IAG [Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft] or as the London Bureau, from the city where its headquarters was located. The participants in this meeting had included the ILP, the SAP, the Independent Socialist Labor Party of Poland (NSPP), the Independent Socialist Party of the Netherlands (OSP), and the Norwegian Labor Party.⁴⁴ A subsequent meeting of the IAG in Brussels had adopted a resolution written by Boris Goldenberg of the SAP calling for "the recreation of a new international labor movement."⁴⁵

To a greater or less degree, all of these groups favored establishment of a new international. However, they had vastly different concepts about the nature of such an organization and disagreed profoundly on a number of programmatic issues, particularly

with regard to the Soviet Union. In retrospect it is clear that Trotsky and his associates were excessively optimistic in thinking that all or most of these groups could be welded together in a new international under Trotsky's leadership and in conformance with his ideas.

One of the decisions of the August Trotskyist plenum had been to send an observer delegation to the IAG congress to be held in Paris at the end of the same month. Apparently the original idea had been for each of the sections of the International Left Opposition to have its own representatives at the meeting. However, it was finally decided to limit the Trotskyist delegations to those of the German section and the International Secretariat of the International Left Opposition. Peter J. Schmidt of the Dutch osf presided over the Paris meeting.

It was agreed among Trotsky, Sneevliet, and Jakob Walcher of the sap to submit a document to the Paris meeting calling for establishment of a new international and setting forth the principles upon which this new international should be formed. The motion was duly introduced, but the resolutions committee of the meeting refused to accept it.⁴⁶ As a consequence, the document was finally made public as "The Declaration of the Four on the Need for and Bases of a New International." This Declaration was signed by E. Bauer of the International Secretariat of the International Left Opposition, J. Schwalb (Jakob Walcher) of the sap, Hendrik Sneevliet of the Revolutionary Socialist Party of the Netherlands, and P. J. Schmidt of the Independent Socialist Party of the Netherlands.

Two versions of the document were published. The first one, which was probably the version introduced at the Paris Conference, was published in *La Verité* on September 1, 1933. The second version, probably reworked by Leon Trotsky, was somewhat more extensive.⁴⁷ We shall summarize the principal points of the second version.

Point one of the Declaration called for "break with reformist policy," and advo-

cated "the revolutionary struggle for power and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship as the only means for the transformation of the capitalist society into a socialist society."

The second point declared the revolutionary struggle to be international and therefore said that the signers "categorically reject . . . the theory of 'socialism in one country' which undermines the very foundation of proletarian internationalism."⁴⁸

The third point of the document likewise "no less categorically rejected" the ideas of the left-wing "Austro Marxists and left reformists. . . ." It proclaimed that "the victorious working class must direct all of its efforts to the extension of the socialist revolution to other countries."⁴⁹

Point four presented the Trotskyist analysis of the "degeneration" of the Soviet regime and added that "the slavish dependence of the sections of the Comintern on the Soviet leadership led, in its turn, to a new series of grave defeats, to bureaucratic degeneration of the theory and practice of the Communist parties and to their organizational weakening. More than that, the Comintern proved not only incapable of fulfilling its historic role but also more and more of an obstacle in the way of the revolutionary movement."

Points five and six argued that the rise to power of Nazism in Germany had shown the inadequacies of both the Social Democrats and the Communists.⁵⁰ Point seven drew a conclusion from this: "The position of world capitalism; the frightful crisis that plunged the working masses into unheard-of misery; the revolutionary movement of the oppressed colonial masses; the world danger of fascism; the perspective of a new cycle of wars which threatens to destroy the whole human culture—these are the conditions that imperatively demand the welding together of the proletarian vanguard into a *new (Fourth) International*." It added that "the undersigned obligate themselves to direct all their forces to the formation of this International in the shortest possible time

on the firm foundation of the theoretical and strategic principles laid down by Marx and Lenin."⁵¹

Point eight pledged cooperation "with all the organizations, groups, and factions that are actually developing from reformism or bureaucratic centrism (Stalinism) toward revolutionary Marxist policy. . . ." It added that "the new International cannot tolerate any conciliation towards reformism or centrism."

Point nine declared the Soviet Union to be still a workers' state and added that "the new International will inscribe on its banner as one of its most important tasks the defense of the Soviet state from imperialism and internal counter revolution."⁵²

Point ten proclaimed that "*party democracy* is a necessary prerequisite for the healthy development of revolutionary proletarian parties on a national as well as international scale. Without freedom of criticism, without election of functionaries from top to bottom, without the control of the apparatus by the rank and file, no truly revolutionary party is possible." Although recognizing that peculiar circumstances would face illegal parties, it proclaimed that even there "honest information about the party, freedom of criticism, and a real inner unity between the leadership and the party majority" were required. It concluded that "the new International, as well as the parties adhering thereto must build their entire inner life on the basis of *democratic centralism*."⁵³

Point eleven noted that the signers had created a "permanent commission of delegates representatives" to lay the groundwork for the establishment of the new International.⁵⁴

Writing shortly after the LAG conference, Trotsky professed himself pleased with the results of that meeting. He declared them "on balance favorable to the Left Opposition." Writing in the *Internal Bulletin of the Left Communist Opposition* however, he noted that "the declaration of the four was

the only serious result of the Paris conference."⁵⁵ He also observed that representatives of the organizations which had signed that declaration had taken different positions on certain issues at the conference, but counselled his followers to have patience, saying that "we conserve our entire right, not only to appear under our own banner, but also openly to give our opinion to our allies on what we consider errors on their part."⁵⁶

The efforts to hold together the four groups which had signed the Declaration were doomed to fail. This became clear—if it was not already so—in the "Preconference of the Four" held on December 30, 1933, in the apartment of Dr. Weil, father of Simone Weil, in Paris. Those present were Bauer, Trotsky, Peroci, Pierre Frank, Pierre Naville, and Leon Sedov for the Internationalist Communist League; Hendrik Sneevliet for the Dutch RSP, Jacques De Kadt for the Dutch OSP, and Jakob Walcher and Boris Goldenberg for the German SAP.⁵⁷

The minutes of that session indicate that there were very sharp exchanges between Trotsky and both Walcher and De Kadt. Trotsky accused the SAP and OSP of backsliding and of wanting to maintain a foot both in the camp of the Four and that of the London Bureau. For his part, Walcher accused the Trotskyists of "the same sectarian and sterile methods well known to be theirs."⁵⁸ He claimed that "we cannot admit the question being posed in the form: London Bureau or bloc of four. . . ."⁵⁹

De Kadt was, apparently, even more vehement. He said that "the Left Opposition only wishes to get its principles accepted on an international basis, and it considers the Fourth International as only an enlarged LCI." He added that "there is within the new International a different International [LCI plus RSP]. This would be an impossible situation if we quickly construct the new International."⁶⁰

Boris Goldenberg has summed up some of his memories of this meeting:

The topic under discussion was the formation of a new International. I remember Walcher telling Trotsky (a) that a new 'international' could not be formed on the basis of a *defeat* (that by Hitler); (b) nor as a union of sects under the leadership and total hegemony of a historical leader like Trotsky who, inevitably, would dominate the scene. Trotsky required that we (SAP and others) separate ourselves from centrist and reformist parties, like the Norwegian one—to which Walcher (and I) contested that this would mean to break off relations with the only proletarian mass party collaborating with us. So nothing came for the moment of the plan to create the IV International—with us. By 'us' is meant here the SAP and the Dutch De Kadt group, not the other members of the London 'International' considered by Trotsky as centrists and reformists.⁶¹

The Bloc of Four soon broke up. The German SAP had little more to do with the Trotskyists. Although Sneevliet's party had joined the International Left Opposition in September 1933,⁶² it was March 1935 before it merged with the OSP to form the Revolutionary Socialist Labor Party (RSAP). Subsequently, the RSAP broke with Trotsky and never became a part of the Fourth International. Nor did any of the other groups which Trotsky had hoped to attract to the movement for the Fourth International finally evolve in that direction. He had at one time had particular hope for attracting the Swedish Communist Party of Kilbom and the British Independent Labor Party.⁶³

The International Youth Bureau

In February 1934 an effort was made to establish an international organization of those youth groups which were committed to the establishment of the Fourth International. This took place at a conference the delegates to which first gathered in Amsterdam at the Red Lion Hotel. Among the

guests at the hotel were a number of heavy-set men who were police agents, although the conference delegates did not at first recognize them as such. These gentlemen took notes on overheard telephone conversations and private discussions on which they were able to eavesdrop. They found out that the conference was going to convene in a town outside Amsterdam and sent word of this to higher police authorities.

The Trotskyists had about fifteen delegates to this conference and were the largest single group. They included people from the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany (in exile), among others. There were also representatives from IAG affiliates, including the British ILP, Norwegian and Swedish groups, and the German SAP.

Soon after arriving in Amsterdam, the American Albert Glotzer and Walter Held (Heinz Epe), both Trotskyists, sought to find Willy Brandt, who was an SAP delegate. They were first told that he was not there, but when they insisted they were told that he was busy, at a meeting. That made Glotzer and Held a little suspicious, and they discovered later that their suspicions were justified.

When the conference opened in the provincial town the Trotskyists found that they were being excluded from any influence in the meeting. None of them was elected to the présidium of the conference, none was elected to the major committees. When Glotzer got up to protest, the police moved in, said the meeting was over and they were all under arrest.

Four Germans among those arrested were put across the German border by the mayor of the Dutch town. The others were put in a comfortable jail and then were deported to Belgium. The Americans were put on a milk train to Antwerp, whence they went to Brussels.

In the Amsterdam jail Held, Glotzer, and Willy Brandt had agreed to reassemble the conference in Brussels, although giving out word that they would meet in Luxemburg. When they got to Brussels, the local Trots-

kysts suggested that they meet in a restaurant in front of the city police headquarters. There, on the second floor, they held a day-long meeting.

The big argument at the meeting concerned the formation of a new international. The Trotskyists pushed for a declaration in favor of the Fourth International, but the non-Trotskyists opposed this and a compromise was reached, the call being for a new international. Subsequently, Trotsky strongly attacked Walter Held for agreeing to this compromise. It was agreed that the new International Bureau of Revolutionary Youth Organizations would have its headquarters in Stockholm.⁶⁴

This Youth Bureau was short-lived. It was deadlocked between the Trotskyists who continued to insist on its working for establishment of the Fourth International and the SAP representatives and others who opposed this idea. The Youth Bureau sent Willy Brandt as a delegate to a conference of the IAG in Paris in February 1935, and he denounced Hendrik Sneevliet and P. J. Schmidt, the Dutch delegates, for their support of the idea of the Fourth International. In August 1935 Brandt and his allies expelled Walter Held from the Bureau, which went out of existence soon thereafter.⁶⁵

The Internationalist Communist League and the French Turn

The Bloc of Four clearly failed as a device to bring together the various parties and groups which had been alienated from the Second and Third Internationals so as to form a new Fourth International with a Trotskyist program. The fact was that the Trotskyists remained largely isolated from organized labor and the movement for social change in the handful of countries in which during its first half-decade International Trotskyism had been able to establish a foothold. With the possible exception of its Dutch affiliate the movement consisted of small agitational groups, largely made up of intellectuals, with very limited contacts with the working

class, whose vanguard they aspired to become.

This led Trotsky to propose another strategy, the so-called "French Turn." Although he certainly could not foresee this, Leon Trotsky's recommendation to his French followers in June 1934 was to raise an issue which would plague the international Trotskyist movement for the next half-century: the entry of the Trotskyists into the ranks of the mass workers' parties, to try to recruit there enough followers to convert their own organizations into "mass" groups, or if exceptionally lucky, even to seize control of the groups which they entered and to convert them into mass revolutionary parties.

Trotsky first proposed entry into the Socialist Party to the Ligue Communiste Internationaliste of France in June 1934. The idea met with resistance but was accepted by most French Trotskyists. Subsequently, the same strategy was applied in Belgium and the United States. However, Trotsky apparently met great opposition to making the French Turn into a general policy of the international Trotskyist movement.

The issue arose at an Enlarged Plenum of the Internationalist Communist League in October 1934. According to Rodolphe Prager, the resolution endorsing the new policy of the French League "obtained a small majority on the condition that the turn be limited to France."⁶⁶

The resolution of the October 1934 Plenum started with the familiar recitation of the "degeneration" of the Comintern and a short account of the transformation of the Trotskyist movement from an "opposition" to a group seeking to establish a Fourth International. It then sketched the supposedly new situation within the Socialist parties, that is, the tendency toward polarization within them between right and left, and the fact that the impact of events had forced some of them to assume revolutionary positions, a situation of which advantage could be taken.

The resolution then contained a passage

which, in view of subsequent history, one might find curious. It read:

The psychology, ideas, customs, usually lag behind developments of objective relations in society and in the class; even in the revolutionary organizations the dead lay their hands upon the living. The preparatory period of propaganda has given us the cadres without which we could not make one step forward, but the same period has, as a heritage, permitted the expression within the organization of extremely abstract conceptions of the construction of a new party and a new international. In their chemically pure form, these conceptions are expressed in the most complete manner by the dead sect of Bordiguists who hope that the proletarian vanguard will convince itself, by means of a hardly readable literature, of the correctness of their position and sooner or later will correctly gather around their sect. . . .⁶⁷

The resolution discussed various objections to the move of the French Trotskyists. It then said that "the Plenum notes that the position openly taken by the Bolshevik-Leninist group within the SFIO . . . has nothing in common with capitulation but represents the application of the principles and methods of the ICL in its new orientation and under new conditions."

The resolution ended with a hint that the French Turn might have a wider application, beyond France. It said, "the Plenum orders the IS to regularly furnish materials to all sections, illustrating the work of the French section in the new situation, in order that the ICL as a whole may utilize the experiences thus acquired."⁶⁸

The 1936 First International Conference for the Fourth International

The policy of entrism somewhat expanded the forces of the Trotskyists in a few countries, notably Belgium and the United

States. Its first effects in France were also positive, although subsequent internecine conflict among the French Trotskyists resulted in the loss of much of the ground they had gained.

Meanwhile, the work for the establishment of a Fourth International went on. Clearly Trotsky spent much of his time and attention on this effort. He was even concerned with the minutiae of the proposed new organization. Thus, he sent to the International Secretariat in July 1935 a curious letter discussing the appropriate name for the new organization. He ruled out the plain title Fourth International on the grounds that "it is a number, not a name," and similarly excluded "socialist" and "communist" for the title because they had been "much compromised." He finally suggested "World Party of the Socialist Revolution" and proposed that be appended to the name of each national group, giving the example, "Workers Party of the United States (American Section of the World Party of the Socialist Revolution)."⁶⁹

In August 1935 a new "Open Letter to Revolutionary Organizations: For the IV International" was issued. Written by Trotsky just before leaving France for his stay in Norway, this document, which was a new appeal to rally all groups and individuals who favored a new international, met some resistance, particularly among the French Trotskyists, who feared that it might embarrass their work within the Socialist Party.⁷⁰ However, it was finally issued and published in *La Verité* on August 23, 1935.

The open letter was signed on behalf of the Dutch RSAP by Hendrik Sneevliet and J. P. Schmidt; for the Workers Party of the United States by James P. Cannon and A. J. Muste; for the Workers Party of Canada by J. MacDonald and Maurice Spector; and by the Bolshevik-Leninist Group of the SFIO (no names indicated). For the International Secretariat, the document bore the signatures of Crux (Leon Trotsky), Martin (Alfonso Leonetti), and Dubois (Ruth Fischer).⁷¹

The next step toward establishing the

Fourth International was a conference which met in Paris, July 26–31, 1936 [although it was reported as meeting in Geneva]. Trotsky had wanted it to be the founding congress of the new international. However, in the face of resistance, he accepted a compromise according to which it was declared that the meeting launched a new group, the Movement for the Fourth International, into which the Internalist Communist League was being merged.⁷²

According to the official announcement of the International Secretariat, this 1936 conference was attended by four French delegates, two from the PCI, and two from the Youth; one from the Dutch RSAP; two delegates and two observers from Great Britain; two from the German IDK; and one Italian. There were also representatives of the Soviet Bolshevik-Leninists, representatives of the International Secretariat and the International Youth Secretary, as well as two "observers" from the United States.⁷³ Since the U.S. Trotskyists had recently entered the Socialist Party they could not appear at this meeting as "official" delegates. Other groups which were not able to send delegates for financial reasons included those of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland, Romania, and Switzerland. Long distances and "the need to limit the conference for reasons of legality to a minimum of delegates" were responsible for the fact that no one had been invited from Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain, Lithuania, a number of Latin American countries, China, Indochina, Australia, and South Africa.⁷⁴

The conference adopted a considerable number of resolutions, both programmatic and organizational. One of the latter was in approval of the move of the French section in expelling Raymond Molinier.⁷⁵ Another established a framework for the new Movement for the Fourth International including an international conference as the supreme authority, with a General Council, to be in charge between conferences and to meet at least once a year; and an International Secre-

tariat to carry on day-to-day activities.⁷⁶ Still another resolution endorsed the move of the U.S. Trotskyists to enter the Socialist Party.⁷⁷

Trotsky wrote three of the programmatic documents adopted at the 1936 conference. These were the resolution on "The New Revolutionary Upsurge and the Tasks of the Fourth International," "The Fourth International and the Soviet Union," and "To the Public Opinion of the Workers of the Whole World (An Appeal for the Russian Revolutionists)."⁷⁸

The resolution on the New Revolutionary Upsurge pictured the existence of a prerevolutionary situation which was going to be resolved in favor of either socialism or fascism. It asserted that "the sections of the Fourth International clearly and distinctly see this danger. . . . They teach the vanguard to organize itself and to prepare."⁷⁹ This resolution also claimed that "not a single revolutionary grouping in world history has yet experienced such terrible pressure as the grouping of the Fourth International." They were subject not only to the persecution of the elements of the status quo, but also to that of the Stalinist bureaucracy both in the USSR and in the Comintern.⁸⁰ However, the resolution argued, the future lay with International Trotskyism. It proclaimed that "the organizations of the revolutionary vanguard will cease to be isolated. The slogans of Bolshevism will become the slogans of the masses. The coming epoch will be the epoch of the Fourth International."⁸¹

Probably the most crucial document adopted at the 1936 conference was that on "The Fourth International and the Soviet Union." It put forth the position which was to be Trotskyist orthodoxy for the next half-century. This document was almost strident in its denunciation of the Stalinist regime in the USSR. It argued that "inequality is growing with seven league strides" and that "Soviet bureaucracy has acquired an actual independence from the toilers."⁸²

The resolution also accused the Stalinist

regime of beginning "to reestablish and glorify the petty bourgeois family . . . that fostering soil of all species of social idiocy." It argued that "state coercion is not attenuated . . . but on the contrary it acquires an exceptionally concentrated, open and cynical character," and that the Communist Party "is independent both of the people and of its own members and . . . represents a *political machine of the ruling caste*."⁸³ However, the resolution did not accept the idea that the bureaucracy has become a new ruling class in a Marxist sense. This resolution summed up the situation by saying that "the working class of the USSR has been robbed of the last possibility of legal reformation of the state. The struggle against the bureaucracy necessarily becomes a revolutionary struggle."⁸⁴

In spite of these bitter denunciations of the Stalin regime the resolution drawn up by Trotsky and adopted by the 1936 conference argued that "it remains a fact of decisive significance, however, that all the social relationships of the USSR, the privileges of the Soviet aristocracy included, have themselves in the long run on state and kolkhoz property, acquired by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie which, in distinction from capitalist property, opens up the possibility of the growth of industry and of culture. The historical gulf dug by the October Revolution still continues to separate the Soviet state planned economy from capitalist 'stateism.'"⁸⁵

The resolution defined the kind of revolution which was required in the USSR. It argued that "if a *social counterrevolution*, i.e., the overthrow of State ownership of the means of production and of the land as well as the reestablishment of private property is necessary for the return of the USSR to capitalism, then for the further development of socialism a *political revolution* has become inevitable, i.e., the violent overthrow of the political rule of the degenerated bureaucracy while maintaining the property relations established by the October Revolution.

It concluded that "the proletarian vanguard of the USSR, basing itself upon the toiling masses of the whole country, and upon the revolutionary movement of the whole world, will have to batter down the bureaucracy by force, restore Soviet democracy, eliminate the enormous privileges and assure a genuine advance to socialist equality."⁸⁶

However, in spite of the strong condemnation of the Stalinist regime and the call for a political revolution against it, Trotsky and the 1936 conference pledged support to the USSR against all contenders. The resolution stated that "*The proletarian vanguard of the entire world* will support the USSR in war, in spite of the parasitic bureaucracy and the uncrowned Negus in the Kremlin because the social regime in the USSR, despite all its deformations and ulcers, represents an enormous historical step forward in comparison with putrefied capitalism."⁸⁷

The third resolution prepared by Trotsky and adopted by the 1936 conference, "To the Public Opinion of the Workers of the Whole World," elaborated further on the situation in the USSR. It started by observing that "the question of the fate of the Soviet Union is close to the heart of every thinking worker. A hundred and seventy million human beings are carrying out the greatest experiment in social emancipation in history. The destruction of the new regime would signify a terrible blow to the development of the whole of mankind. But precisely for this reason the necessity arises for an honest, i.e., critical attitude toward all these complex processes and contradictory phenomena which are to be observed in the life of the Soviet Union."⁸⁸ The resolution then went on with a detailed critique of the latest events in the USSR, particularly the introduction of the "Stalinist" constitution.⁸⁹

This July 1936 Paris meeting was the last full-fledged gathering of the international Trotskyist movement before the conference which formally founded the Fourth International.

Fourth International: The Establishment of the Fourth International

The Founding Conference of the Fourth International was finally held on September 3, 1938. Meeting under highly secretive circumstances a handful of men proclaimed the existence of what they proudly proclaimed to be the World Party of the Socialist Revolution. Working at what must have been a marathon pace this Founding Conference, completing all of its work in a single day, also adopted statutes for the new group, elected its officials and adopted a wide range of resolutions, in addition to ratifying the so-called Transitional Program, which became the most fundamental statement of the position of International Trotskyism.

The Background of the Founding Conference

The Historical Circumstances of the Conference

The meeting which formally established the Fourth International took place at the height of the Munich crisis, at a moment when the threat of a new world war seemed imminent. The Trotskyists had to take extreme security measures to assure the safe fulfillment of their mission. They had to protect themselves not only from the possible interference by the French police but, more importantly, from attempts of the Soviet GPU to disrupt the meeting and perhaps to kill some or all of those attending it.

In the months preceding the Founding Conference the GPU had claimed several victims from among the Trotskyists and their sympathizers. Erwin Wolf and been kid-

napped and murdered in Spain, Ignaz Reiss, himself a GPU agent who had defected to the Trotskyists, was assassinated in Switzerland. Leon Sedov, Trotsky's own son, had died in a White Russian hospital in Paris in February 1938 under very strange circumstances. Most relevant to the Founding Conference, Rudolf Klement, the member of the International Secretariat who had been most closely concerned with organizing the meeting, had been murdered in Paris in July, and documents which he had been carrying were purloined.¹

After the meeting adjourned it was announced that the Founding Conference of the Fourth International had been held "somewhere in Switzerland."² In fact, however, the meeting took place at the home of Alfred Rosmer who, although he had broken politically with him eight years before had remained Leon Trotsky's personal friend and was willing to make his residence available for the meeting which fulfilled Trotsky's long-held dream.

The Rosmer house was located in the countryside some thirty miles from Paris. It was a barn which had been converted into a residence. There was an entryway and beyond it a long table around which the meeting was held. Beyond that there were the living quarters, including a kitchen and dining rooms, and several upstairs bedrooms.

Those who attended the meeting sought to be as circumspect as possible about where they were going and what they were going to do. Thus, they took a number of different routes from Paris to the Rosmer house—although they all had to traverse the same road in the end.

Because of security considerations it was necessary that the meeting not last more than a day. As a consequence, a great deal of business had to be transacted in a very short time, even though over some issues there was considerable discussion and even controversy. The situation was further complicated by the fact that there was no common language which all of those present could

understand and use. As a consequence Max Shachtman served as a kind of universal interpreter. He spoke not only English but good German and French, and a little Polish and Russian. He also spoke Yiddish, which he used particularly in conversing with the Russian and Polish delegates when his mastery of their languages was not sufficient. Thus, the role of the American leader was particularly crucial in facilitating the business of the day.³

Preparations for the Conference

Rodolphe Prager has noted that the Founding Conference of the Fourth International "was undoubtedly better prepared than the previous ones."⁴ The laying of the groundwork for the meeting was done in close consultation with Trotsky. In March 1938 a delegation from the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, consisting of James Cannon, Rose Karsner, Max Shachtman, and Vincent Dunne, had spent six days with Trotsky, during which much of the preliminary planning for the meeting was done. Diego Rivera also sat in on some of these sessions. At that time it was decided to hold the conference at the end of June or the beginning of July, although in fact it did not meet until two months later. It has been noted that much of this week of discussion was devoted to "programmatic documents to be prepared for the conference." Stenographic notes were kept of these discussions.⁵

There has been some controversy over just what role Trotsky had in preparing the fundamental documents which were adopted by the Founding Conference. In his discussions with the SWP visitors Trotsky had said that "I will prepare, then: (1) transitional demands; (2) the question of democracy; (3) war; (4) manifesto on the world situation, either separately or in the form of one basic pamphlet."⁶

In his biography of Trotsky, Isaac Deutscher wrote that "throughout the sum-

mer of 1938 Trotsky was busy preparing the 'Draft Programme' and resolutions for the 'foundation congress' of the International."⁷ However, Will Reischer has claimed that Deutscher "was mistaken in attributing authorship of most of the conference resolutions to Trotsky, who actually wrote only the major programmatic document, 'The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International,' also known as the 'Transitional Program.'"⁸

Subsequent to the visit of the swpers to Mexico City, commissions were established which met for about a month before the plenary session of the founding conference, preparing the documentation to be submitted to the meeting.⁹ According to the report of the International Secretariat on the conference, "the plenary sessions have been prepared with the collaboration and under the direction of the IS, by particular commissions which submitted the results of their work to the conference. The plenary meetings were themselves followed by meetings of special commissions established for complementary work of editing and revision. These commissions, designated by the conference, were only to carry out the wishes of the conference."¹⁰

Other preliminary meetings were held before the final plenary meeting of the Founding Conference. The most important of these was a "preconference" in New York of Trotskyist groups of the Western Hemisphere. It established a Pan American and Pacific Bureau of the soon-to-be proclaimed Fourth International.¹¹

As a consequence of this preliminary work, the founding conference was presented with a well-thought-out agenda, and the documentation necessary for the discussion of each item on it. The agenda consisted of 1. Report of the International Secretariat; 2. International Theses, divisible into three sections: labor questions, the USSR, the war problem, including the situations in Spain and China; 3. Statutes of the International; 4. Reports of Commissions dealing with the

situation of affiliates in various countries; 5. International solidarity; 6. The Youth; and 7. Naming of the International Executive Committee.¹²

*Delegates and Whom They
Represented*

According to a credentials report made at the beginning of the meeting by Pierre Naville, there were delegates at the Founding Conference from the United States, Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, Greece, Italy, Germany, Russia, and Brazil. He added that some of those present also had "mandates" from groups in Spain, Czechoslovakia, Canada, and Mexico.¹³

According to a report on the Founding Conference published shortly afterward by the New York Trotskyist paper *Socialist Appeal*, thirty people attended the meeting.¹⁴ The minutes of the session would seem to indicate a somewhat smaller number taking an active part. On the most important issue on which there was a vote, whether or not to declare the establishment of the Fourth International, only twenty-two ballots were cast.¹⁵ The same number voted on several other issues.

Trotsky, of course, did not attend. However, a number of the most important figures then active in International Trotskyism did participate. The delegation from the United States included James Cannon, Max Shachtman (who presided over the sessions),¹⁶ Nathan Gould, and Emanuel Geltman.¹⁷ Pierre Naville, Ivan Craipeau, Jean Rous, and Marcel Hic represented France; Mario Pedrosa, the founder of Brazilian Trotskyism, represented his country. Michel Raptis, better known as Michel Pablo, was present from the Greek movement. Leon Lesoil was a delegate from Belgium, and C. L. R. James was a member of the British delegation.¹⁸

Pierre Naville presented the meeting with an account of the organizations then "regularly affiliated" with the Fourth International. These were

France: Parti Ouvrière Internationaliste and Jeunesse Socialiste Révolutionnaire
Great Britain: Revolutionary Socialist League

Belgium: Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire and Jeunesse Socialiste Révolutionnaire

Germany: German Communist Internationalists (IKD)

Poland: Bolshevik-Leninist Group

United States: Socialist Workers Party and Young People's Socialist League (IV International)

Canada: Bolshevik-Leninist Group

Spain: Bolshevik-Leninist Group of Spain

Netherlands: Bolshevik-Leninist Group

Greece: Internationalist Communist League and Internationalist Communist Union

Switzerland: Marxistische Aktion

Czechoslovakia: Iskra-Banner Group

Norway: Bolshevik-Leninist Group

Romania: Bolshevik-Leninist Group

Austria: Revolutionary Communists

USSR: Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists)

Mexico: Liga Comunista Internacionalista

Cuba: Partido Obrero Revolucionario

Dominican Republic: Bolshevik-Leninists

Brazil: Partido Operario Leninista

Argentina: Bolshevik-Leninist Group

Chile: Partido Obrero Revolucionario

Bolivia: Bolshevik-Leninist Group

Uruguay: Bolshevik-Leninist Group

China: Internationalist Communist League

Indo-China: Union of Bolshevik-Leninists

Australia: Labor Party (?)

South Africa: Bolshevik-Leninist Group

Naville also noted that there were two other groups which had "liaison with the IS without being affiliated." These were the Proletar group in Czechoslovakia and an unnamed organization in Denmark.¹⁹

At one point Pierre Naville presented the conference with some estimates concerning the membership of the various affiliated national groups. According to him, the U.S. Socialist Workers Party was by far the

largest group in the International; he credited it with 2,500 members. The Belgian party had 800 members, the French 600, the Polish 350. Naville reported that there were approximately 200 members of the German affiliate, between 150-200 in the Czechoslovakian group, and 170 in the newly united British affiliate, the Revolutionary Socialist League. The International's affiliates in Greece, Chile, Cuba, and South Africa were each credited with about one hundred members; that of Canada with seventy-five, and the Australian, Dutch, and Brazilian with about fifty. Finally, Naville reported that there were from ten to thirty members of the Spanish affiliate and sixteen in that of Mexico.²⁰

Isaac Deutscher has raised some questions about the supposed size of the various national groups represented at the September 1938 conference. He cited figures which appeared in an *swp Internal Bulletin* of the period claiming a membership of only 1,000 and he noted that Dwight Macdonald claimed in his memoirs that the *swp* had only about eight hundred members.²¹

In any case, it is clear that the new International which was being brought into existence was by no means yet a "mass organization."

Issues and Resolutions

The Question of Founding the International

The small size of the organization sparked what was apparently one of the two or three most warmly debated issues at the Founding Conference, as it had been within some of the organizations which were represented there. That issue was whether or not to proclaim at the meeting the formal existence of the Fourth International. Although the vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the action, it nonetheless had been a question which had been hotly debated before and

which was strongly argued at the meeting itself.

Trotsky was strongly in favor of the September 1938 meeting, going on record as establishing the Fourth International, the World Party of the Socialist Revolution. In his discussions with the Socialist Workers Party leaders six months earlier he had made this very clear: "I agree that it is absolutely naive to postpone. Naturally, we are a weak International but we are an International. This International will become strong by our own action, not by maneuvers of other groups. Naturally we can attract other intermediary groups, but that would be incidental. The general line is our own development . . . we have no reason to boast that we are strong, but we are what we are."²²

In the months preceding the Founding Conference one of the strongest opponents of the proclamation of the Fourth International had been Georges Vereeken, one of the principal leaders of Belgian Trotskyism. He had written that "in our opinion, *the objective and subjective conditions necessary to take that historic step do not yet exist. Our international organization does not yet have profound and solid roots in the international proletariat. We have only feeble groups which, for the most part, are separated from the working masses.*"

Vereeken asked the question, "What are the conditions which would permit taking this supreme act?" and answered it:

For an international to be created, to live, to develop and to become the historic instrument of the proletariat, it is necessary that it come from and be the product of the proletariat, and above all of the struggles against capitalism and its servants. But, our international organization is far from that. It only consists of militants thrown out of the Second and principally of the Third International. *It is not a direct product of the struggles between capital and labor, but in great part, the product of the struggle of tendencies within*

*the old degenerated workers organizations, not a direct product of social struggles, but an indirect product.*²³

Vereeken was out of the movement by the time of the Founding Conference. There the principal opponents of founding the International were the members of the Polish delegation. Subsequently, Isaac Deutscher, who was not present at the meeting, claimed that he had been the author of the statements of the Polish delegates against founding the International at the September 1938 meeting.²⁴

Karl Hersz-Mendl (Sztokfisz), one of the two Polish delegates, first opposed the proclamation of the Fourth International. He was reported as saying that "one cannot discuss the question of the IV apart from the situation of the labor movement. The labor movement is passing through a period of disintegration and depression in the fascist countries. In the democratic countries, the Stalinist pressure is making the workers retreat. . . ."

Hersz-Mendl went on to say that "the III was created after the victory of the Russian revolution and with a great number of Communist parties already formed. Even though the Zimmerwaldian Left was stronger in 1919 than we are today, the Spartakists were against the proclamation of the III International. We don't have numerous organizations. The organizations have no mass influence, above all in the unions. . . ."

The Polish delegate concluded that "the future of all humanity depends on the IV International. One cannot create a fiction, but only a true international. . . . It is the proletariat which will create the IV International. It is necessary to enlighten the workers and prepare the movement. If we remain a propaganda group, the workers will not demand much of us, but if we are an international the workers will demand leadership and we are not able to lead, they will be disillusioned. . . . So long as the IV has no mass parties, it cannot be proclaimed. . . ."²⁵

A number of delegates replied to the Polish arguments, notably Pierre Naville and Max Shachtman. According to the minutes of the meeting Naville argued:

The historical analogies put forward by Karl were all false. There was no analogy whatever between the Fourth and the other Internationals as regards the appropriate moment for their proclamation. The present was a unique political situation which fully justified the creation of the Fourth. The real question was not whether to proclaim the Fourth, but whether the existing national sections really needed a definite international organization. The answer to this question was that in fact it was absolutely necessary for the national sections to have a clearly delimited international organization whatever size it might be. It was essential to put an end to the present indeterminate situation and to have a definite program, a definite international leadership, and definite national sections.²⁶

Max Shachtman also argued against Hersz-Mendl's historical analogies. He noted, according to the minutes of the meeting, that "as for the Third, Lenin posed the question long before the Russian Revolution; he did not bring the proposal up at Zimmerwald because he hoped to win over various vacillating and centrist groups. It was the same consideration which prevented us from proclaiming the Fourth in 1936; it was still hoped to gain the centrist organizations. Since 1936, however, all the centrist organizations have either disintegrated or evolved away from us. The path is thus clear for the proclamation of the Fourth, and it is necessary to constitute it definitely."²⁷

When the vote was finally taken the motion to declare the Fourth International in existence, was passed, nineteen to three. Only the French delegate Craipeau voted with the two Poles.²⁸

*Implementing the Decision to
Proclaim the Fourth International*

The debate and vote on the proclamation of the existence of the new international was actually part of the discussion of the statutes of the organization. The vote on this general issue was also nineteen in favor, with the same three delegates voting against the statutes.²⁹

The Statutes of the Fourth International were a relatively short document of only thirteen numbered articles. Article one proclaimed the name of the organization to be Fourth International (World Party of the Socialist Revolution). Article four proclaimed that "The *internal structure* of the International, on the local, national and world scales, is determined by principles and practice of democratic centralism. The sections are required to observe the decisions and resolutions of the International Conference, and, in its absence, of the International Executive Committee represented during the intervals between its meetings by the International Secretariat—while nevertheless retaining the right of appeal before the next higher bodies until the next International Conference."

The Statutes provided that the International Conference should be held every two years, and the International Executive Committee of fifteen members should meet at least every three months. There was also provision for subsecretariats to be set up in various parts of the world to work under the general direction of the International Secretariat. Sections were empowered to recall any of their members serving on the International Executive Committee with the approval of a majority of IEC members.

It was provided that there could only be one section in any country. Mergers of such sections with other groups seeking to enter the International had to have the approval of the IEC. . . . All national sections were required to pay regular monthly or quarterly dues to the International.

Article thirteen provided that "the IEC has the right, after examination of and consultation with the interested parties, to pronounce the expulsion of sections or individual members of the Fourth International. Decisions of expulsion are executory, although the interested parties retain the right of appeal before the International Conference."³⁰

The founding conference also elected the first International Executive Committee. Its members were J. Rous, Pierre Naville, and Joannes Bardin (Boitel) of France; James P. Cannon, Max Shachtman, and one additional member to be named by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States; Leon Lesoil and Walter Dauge of Belgium; C. L. R. James and Denzil Harbor from Great Britain; Julian from Italy; Karl Herz-Mendl from Poland; Mario Pedrosa of Brazil; Thu Thau of Indochina; and Leon Trotsky as a "secret member." There was also to be a youth representative to be named by a youth conference which was supposed to be held in the near future. The vote on these names was unanimous.³¹

Another organizational matter consisted of a series of resolutions concerning the internal situations of several of the affiliates of the International. One of these congratulated the British comrades on having achieved unity in a single organization; another ordered the immediate unification of the two Greek organizations represented at the conference. A resolution on the situation in Poland ordered the Trotskyists there to withdraw from the Jewish Labor Bund and form a separate organization; another called for the reorganization of the Mexican section and condemned the policies of those who had hitherto been leading it; still another noted reunification of the Canadian Section and directed it to continue to work within the Canadian Commonwealth Federation, that country's Second International affiliate. Finally, a particularly harsh resolution condemned "the present state of disorganization" in the French Section and laid

down lines for the reorientation of its activities. This was supplemented by a resolution endorsing the decision of the French Trotskyists to exclude Raymond Molinier from their ranks.³²

Another organizational question dealt with by the conference was the establishment of organizations complementary to the Fourth International itself. One of those resolutions noted the extensive persecution of "revolutionists" by bourgeois and Stalinist organizations and governments and called for establishment of national "relief and defense organizations" by the various sections, and the formation of an international committee to coordinate their work.³³ Another resolution, ostensibly issued by "the International Conference of the Youth of the Fourth International, Lausanne, Switzerland," called for rallying of youth around the new International and put forth a series of demands for adequate opportunities for work, nondiscriminatory social legislation and expansion of educational facilities.³⁴

The Sino-Japanese and American Resolutions

The Founding Conference of the Fourth International adopted three programmatic resolutions. By far the most significant and long-lasting of these was the so-called Transitional Program. However, the other two, on the Sino-Japanese War and the "Thesis on the World Role of American Imperialism" were also important reflections of Trotskyist thinking at the time of the formal establishment of the Fourth International.

The resolution on "The War in the Far East and the Revolutionary Perspectives" started out by proclaiming that the conflict between China and Japan "assumes the character of a war of liberation."³⁵ Most of the twenty-page document consisted of analysis of the role of the ruling classes of Japan, China, Great Britain, France, and the United States in the struggle, as well as that

of the Soviet regime and the Chinese Communist Party. The resolution reviewed the old condemnation by the Trotskyists of the policies of Stalin during the 1926-27 civil war in China and extended that condemnation to include the supposed "surrender" of the Chinese Communists, with Stalin's backing, in the period of Chiang Kai-shek's domination of China.

The last two numbered paragraphs of the resolution (Numbers XXXI and XXXII) then spelled out the attitude to be adopted toward the conflict then raging. The first of these proclaimed that "having discovered in experience the utter bankruptcy and impotence of the Kuomintang, the national bourgeoisie, and their Stalinist allies, the Chinese masses will more and more incline to rely on their own organizations and their own arms. They will look to the Bolshevik-Leninists for leadership and rally under the revolutionary standards of the Fourth International." This turn of events will presage a vast revolutionary upheaval encompassing not only China, but Japan and the Japanese colonies.³⁶

Finally, paragraph thirty-two proclaimed:

The perspectives outlined above obligate the workers in all countries, and especially the revolutionary vanguard, to support China's struggle against Japan by all possible means. The defeat of Japanese imperialism will not only open roads to the revolution in China and Japan but will encourage fresh waves of revolt in all the colonies of the imperialist powers. It will, moreover, remove a grave menace to the Soviet Union and stimulate the Soviet proletariat to struggle against the counterrevolutionary Stalin regime. The international revolutionary campaign for aid to China must proceed under the banner of workers' sanctions against Japan and find its full expression in the promotion of the class struggle and the proletarian revolution.³⁷

The position of the United States in the

world at that time was considered of sufficient importance to be worth a separate resolution. That document started by pointing out that the United States, although working everywhere to expand its imperialist influence, operated differently in Latin America, Europe, and the Far East.

In Latin America, the resolution argued, the United States had been increasingly dominant since the turn of the twentieth century. Using the Monroe Doctrine it had fought against the influence particularly of the formerly dominant British, and more recently against growing penetration by Germany and Japan.

The Roosevelt administration, the resolution argued, "despite all its bland pretensions, has made no real alteration in the imperialist tradition of its predecessors. . . . The 'good neighbor' policy is nothing but the attempt to unify the Western Hemisphere under the hegemony of Washington, as a solid bloc wielded by the latter in its drive to close the door of the two American continents to all the foreign imperialist powers except itself."³⁸

In its relationship to Europe since the First World War, the U.S. had passed through three phases. In the first "it appeared as a brutal aggressor in defense of the vast financial interests acquired by the American ruling class in the outcome of the war, and by virtue of its tremendous industrial-financial-military power, it contributed the decisive force required by the Allies for the crushing and prostrating of the Central Powers, especially Germany."

Then, "in the second stage, inaugurated by the defeat of the German proletariat at the end of 1933, the United States appeared at once as the 'pacifier' of Europe and as the greatest counter-revolutionary force. . . ." It demanded the disarmament of Europe so that the Europeans would have the resources available to repay their war debts to the United States.

Finally, "in the present, last stage of its intervention," the United States "far from

eliminating or even moderating the conflicts among the European powers themselves" has caused "an enormous aggravation of the inter-European conflicts of the various powers. All of them are being driven irresistibly towards a new world war, some in defense of their present share of the rations to which America's power has reduced Europe, others in struggle for such an increase in their share as will contribute substantially towards resolving their internal contradictions. . . ."³⁹

Insofar as the Far East is concerned, the United States, as a late participant in the struggle for power and influence, had favored the "open door," particularly insofar as the exploitation of China was concerned. The resolution saw the principal rival of the United States in the Asian area as still being Great Britain, although for the time being it supported British resistance to the militant imperialism of Japan.⁴⁰

However, "the question of the war between Japan and the United States for the domination of the Pacific and the Far East is . . . at the top of the order of the day. Fearing the outcome of a war with the United States at the present moment. . . . Japan has been making desperate efforts to placate the United States and drive a wedge between it and England, at least until her position on the mainland has been consolidated."⁴¹

From this analysis, the resolution concluded that "the struggle against American imperialism is therefore at the same time a struggle against the coming imperialist war and for the liberation of the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Hence, it is inseparable from the class struggle of the American proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie and cannot be conducted apart from it."⁴²

The Founding Conference resolution proclaimed that the Fourth International was "for the immediate and unconditional independence of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Philippine Islands, Hawaii, Samoa, and

all other direct colonies, dependencies and protectorates of American imperialism."⁴³ It concluded by instructing its Latin American sections to develop closer association with the U.S. section and the struggle in the United States for revolutionary change, and advised the U.S. section to pay more attention, through its press, demonstrations, and other means to the struggle of the workers of the countries subjected to U.S. imperialism, and particularly to carry out propaganda and organizational work among people from those countries living in the United States.⁴⁴

The Transitional Program

By far the most important programmatic document passed by the Founding Conference of the Fourth International was the long resolution entitled "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," more popularly known as "The Transitional Program," which had been drawn up by Trotsky himself. This document became the most fundamental statement of the position of International Trotskyism.

The perspective from which the Transitional Program was written was that the world revolution was imminent, and that the Fourth International would "inevitably" lead that process. It started off with the statement that "the world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat." It then went on to claim that "the economic prerequisite for the proletarian revolution has already in general achieved the highest point of fruition that can be reached under capitalism. . . ."⁴⁵

Trotsky further reiterated that point: "All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet 'ripened' for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened,' they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next

historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to the revolutionary leadership."⁴⁶

Trotsky then set forth his concept of a "transitional" program for the revolutionary epoch. He wrote that "the strategic task of the next period—a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard. . . . It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."⁴⁷

Trotsky noted that the social democratic parties had long had both "maximum" and "minimum" programs but insisted that between these "no bridge existed." He then went on to say that "the Fourth International does not discard the program of the old 'minimal' demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. . . . But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary perspective. Insofar as the old, partial, 'minimal' demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism—and this occurs at each step—the Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very bases of the bourgeois regime. . . ."⁴⁸

The first two transitional demands suggested by the document were those for "employment and decent living conditions for all."⁴⁹ These are to be achieved by further specific demands for sliding wage scales tied

to price increases, and "a sliding scale of working hours," to spread the available work and assure full employment of all, but without any reduction in wages. Trotsky commented that "by means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery."⁵⁰

Trotsky declared that the members of the Fourth International would continue to work in all mass organizations, particularly the existing unions, "for the purpose of strengthening them and raising their spirit of militancy." He soundly denounced "sectarian attempts to build or preserve small 'revolutionary' unions, as a second edition of the party," and declared that "self-isolation of the capitulationist variety from mass trade unions, which is tantamount to a betrayal of the revolution, is incompatible with membership in the Fourth International."⁵¹

However, not only did Trotsky's document declare that the unions "cannot replace the party," but that "as organizations expressive of the top layers of the proletariat, trade unions . . . developed powerful tendencies toward compromise with the bourgeois-democratic regime." As a consequence, "the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the task of mass struggle against bourgeois society. . . ."⁵²

The first such organization which Trotsky proposed was the "factory committee." It would be "elected by all the factory employees," and would immediately establish "a counterweight to the will of the administration."⁵³ He observed that "from the moment that the committee makes its appearance, a factual dual power is established in the factory. By its very essence it repre-

sents the transitional state, because it includes in itself two irreconcilable regimes: the capitalist and the proletarian. The fundamental significance of factory committees is precisely contained in the fact that they open the doors if not to a direct revolutionary, then to a prerevolutionary period—between the bourgeois and the proletarian regimes. . . ."⁵⁴

Trotsky's document emphasized that one of the purposes of the factory committees should be to end "business secrets," and to insist on being told all of the financial details of the management of their respective enterprises. He explained that "the immediate tasks of workers' control should be to explain the debits and credits of society, beginning with individual business undertakings; to determine the actual share of the national income appropriated by individual capitalists and by the exploiters as a whole. . . ."⁵⁵

The "transitional" nature of the factory committees was emphasized by Trotsky. He said that "the working out of even the most elementary economic plan—from the point of view of the exploited, not the exploiters—is impossible without workers' control, that is, without the penetration of the workers' eye into all open and concealed springs of capitalist economy. Committees representing individual business enterprises should meet at conferences to choose corresponding committees of trusts, whole branches of industry, economic regions and finally of national industry as a whole. Thus, workers' control becomes a *school for planned economy*." He added that "if the abolition of business secrets be a necessary condition to workers' control, then control is the first step along the road to the socialist guidance of economy."⁵⁶

At the same time that factory committees were seeking to develop workers control, Trotsky asserted that "the socialist program of expropriation, i.e., of political overthrow of the bourgeoisie and liquidation of its economic domination, should in no case during the present transitional period hinder us

from advancing, when the occasion warrants, the demand for the expropriation of several key branches of industry vital for national existence or of the most parasitic group of the bourgeoisie." Most particularly, the nationalization of the banking system must be sought because "only the expropriation of the private banks and the concentration of the entire credit system in the hands of the state will provide the latter with the necessary actual, i.e., material resources—and not merely paper and bureaucratic resources—for economic planning."⁵⁷

Trotsky was apparently very impressed with the revolutionary potential of the sit-down strikes which had occurred in France in 1936 and in the United States a year later. He commented that "sit-down strikes are a serious warning from the masses addressed not only to the bourgeoisie but also to the organizations of the workers, including the Fourth International. . . . The present crisis can sharpen the class struggle to an extreme point and bring nearer the moment of denouement. But that does not mean that a revolutionary situation comes on at one stroke. Actually, its approach is signalized by a continuous series of convulsions. One of these is the wave of sit-down strikes. . . ."

He tied in another transitional demand to the sit-down strike situation, arguing that the employers are "nowhere satisfied with official police and army" and so establish their own private armed groups. Therefore "in connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity for creating *workers groups of self-defense*. It is necessary to write this slogan into the program of the revolutionary wing of the trade unions. It is imperative wherever possible, beginning with the youth groups, to organize groups for self-defense, to drill and acquaint them with the use of arms."⁵⁸

"Workers and Farmers Government"

There were several elements in the Transitional Program which became subjects of

controversy among Trotsky's followers during the nearly half-century following the adoption of that program by the founding conference of the Fourth International. One of these was the "Workers and Farmers Government" formula presented in the document.

Trotsky was anxious in the Transitional Program to differentiate between the way he and his followers might use the term and the way in which the Stalinists were presenting it. He noted that it was first used by the Bolsheviks in 1917 but that then "it represented nothing more than the popular designation for the already established dictatorship of the proletariat."⁵⁹

Trotsky argued that "the slogan, 'workers' and farmers' government' is thus acceptable to us only in the sense that it had in 1917 with the Bolsheviks, i.e., as an anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist slogan, but in no case in the 'democratic' sense which later the epigones gave it, transforming it from a bridge to the socialist revolution into the chief barrier upon its path."⁶⁰

At various times in the future this interpretation of the "workers' and farmers government" was to become an issue of dispute among Trotsky's followers. One faction or another within the movement accused its rivals of regarding the slogan as an intermediary concept different from the dictatorship of the proletariat rather than synonymous with it.

Another aspect of this part of the Transitional Program also became a matter of controversy in the Trotskyist ranks after World War II. Trotsky posed the question of whether "the traditional workers' organizations" could possibly bring into existence the kind of "workers and peasants government" which the Trotskyists advocated. He thought it unlikely, but said that "one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances . . . the petty-bourgeois parties including the Stalinists may go further than they them-

selves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie."⁶¹

In the 1950s Michel Pablo, then the head of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, was to argue that the Stalinist parties then in power in various countries were being forced to "go further than they themselves" wished to go "along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie." On the basis of this analysis, he developed policies which split the Fourth International. The protagonists of the Castro regime within the ranks of International Trotskyism made a somewhat similar analysis in defending the evolution of a "workers state" in Cuba.

However, in 1938 Trotsky argued that as the revolutionary situation developed the factory committees and other spontaneous organizations established by the workers "will soon begin to feel their lack of cohesion and their insufficiency. Not any of the traditional demands can be fully met under the conditions of preserving the bourgeois regime."⁶²

The upshot of this would be the formation of soviets. Trotsky argued that "soviets can arise only at the time when the mass movement enters into an openly revolutionary stage." They would "unite the representatives of all the fighting groups. . . . They throw open their doors to all the exploited. Through these doors pass representatives of all strata, drawn into the general current of the struggle. . . . All political currents of the proletariat can struggle for leadership of the soviets on the basis of the widest democracy. The slogan of *soviets*, therefore, crowns the program of transitional demands."⁶³

Backward Countries and Combined Development

Another element of the Transitional Program, which was to be used by the Trotskyists to differentiate themselves from the Stalinists and sometimes became a subject of controversy within the Trotskyist ranks,

was its discussion of the situation in "colonial and semi-colonial" countries. These countries, Trotsky proclaimed, "are backward by their very essence," but "are part of a world dominated by imperialism." As a result, "their development, therefore, has a *combined* character: the most primitive economic forms are combined with the last word in capitalist technique and culture." As a consequence, "the struggle for the most elementary achievements of national independence and bourgeois democracy is combined with the socialist struggle against world imperialism. Democratic slogans, transitional demands and the problems of the socialist revolution are not divided into separate historical epochs in this struggle, but stem directly from one another."

Trotsky argued that the "central tasks" in those countries were the agrarian revolution and national independence. "Both tasks are closely linked." To illustrate his argument, Trotsky said that it was appropriate in those countries for the revolutionaries to put forward the "slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly." Under this slogan the workers could mobilize the support of the peasantry. But, "then, at a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can and should arise. Their historical role in each given period, particularly their relation to the National Assembly, will be determined by the political level of the proletariat, the bond between them and the peasantry, and the character of the proletarian party policies. Sooner or later, the soviets should overthrow bourgeois democracy. Only they are capable of bringing the democratic revolution to a conclusion and likewise opening an era of socialist revolution."⁶⁴

"The Struggle Against Imperialism and War"

Considerable attention was turned in the Transitional Program to the threat of war

and the way in which the Fourth International should confront it. After condemning both the "collective security" ideas and the pacifism popular in different circles at the time, the program listed a number of specific positions Fourth Internationalists should advocate. These included complete opposition to expenditures on armaments, "complete abolition of secret diplomacy," "military training and arming of workers and farmers under direct control of workers and farmers committees," and various others.

The program then put forward the basic position of the Fourth International with regard to the coming war: "The imperialist bourgeoisie dominates the world. In its basic character the approaching war will therefore be an imperialist war. The fundamental content of the politics of the international proletariat will consequently be a struggle against imperialism and its war. In this struggle, the basic principle is: 'the chief enemy is in *your own country*,' or 'the defeat of *your own* (imperialist) government is the lesser evil.'"⁶⁵

However, since all regimes were not imperialist, the military struggle of the colonial and semicolonial countries "will be not imperialist but liberating. It would be the duty of the international proletariat to aid the oppressed countries in their war against oppressors. The same duty applies in regard to aiding the USSR, or whatever other workers government might arise before the war or during the war."

The program insisted, however, that "the workers of imperialist countries . . . cannot help an anti-imperialist country through their own government no matter what might be the diplomatic and military relations between the two countries at a given moment." Even if a particular imperialist regime was temporarily an ally of an anti-imperialist one, the proletariat of the imperialist country "continues to remain in class opposition to its own government and supports the nonimperialist 'ally' through *its own* methods, i.e., through the methods of

the international class struggle. . . ." Furthermore, "in supporting the colonial country or the USSR in a war, the proletariat does not in the slightest degree solidarize either with the bourgeois government of the colonial country or with the Thermidorian bureaucracy of the USSR."⁶⁶

This position was to give rise to considerable confusion in Trotskyist ranks during World War II. In France and Belgium in particular, after those countries were overrun by the Nazis, there was a tendency on the part of some Trotskyists to equate their countries with the "semi-colonial" group, worthy of the workers' support against Nazi imperialism. Even in the United States and Great Britain the Trotskyists sometimes found it difficult to combine support for the Soviet Union and opposition to the war being waged in alliance with the Soviet Union.

The Russian Question

The section of the Transition Program dealing with the Soviet Union generally adopted what had by then become the traditional Trotskyist position. It stated that "The USSR . . . embodies terrific contradictions. But it still remains a *degenerated workers' state*. Such is the social diagnosis. The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism, or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism."

Considerable attention was devoted to the Moscow Trials which, the program said "came not as a surprise and not as a result of the personal madness of the Kremlin dictator, but as the legitimate offspring of the Thermidor. They grew out of the unbearable conflicts within the Soviet bureaucracy itself. . . ."⁶⁷

The Transitional Program gave a broad view of the nature of the "political revolu-

tion" which the Fourth International sought in the Soviet Union. It postulated that "a fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against *social inequality and political oppression*. . . . The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of *Soviet democracy*."

Specifically, the Transitional Program proclaimed that "as once the bourgeoisie and kulaks were not permitted to enter the soviets, so now it is *necessary to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets*. In the soviets there is room only for representatives of the workers, rank-and-file collective farmers, peasants, and Red Army men."

Becoming more specific than most previous Fourth International documents on how the proposed democratization was to be assured, the Transitional Program proclaimed that "democratization of the soviets is impossible without *legalization of soviet parties*. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognize as soviet parties."

Finally, the section of the program dealing with the USSR called for reorganization of the planned economy "in the interests of the producers and consumers," and of the collective farms "in the interests of the workers there engaged."⁶⁸

Peroration

The Transitional Program adopted by the Founding Conference of the Fourth International on September 3, 1938, ended with a peroration about the International itself. In its conclusion this section of the document returned to the theme with which it began: "The present crisis in human culture is the crisis in the proletarian leadership. The advanced workers, united in the Fourth International, show their class the way out of

the crisis. They offer a program based on international experience in the struggle of the proletariat and of all the oppressed of the world for liberation. They offer a spotless banner. Workers—men and women—of all countries, place yourselves under the banner of the Fourth International. It is the banner of your approaching victory!"⁶⁹

The GPU and the Fourth International in the 1930s

Before proceeding with a discussion of the further history of the Fourth International it is necessary to relate and comment upon the efforts of the Soviet Secret Police, then known as the GPU, to penetrate the highest circles of the movement. This subject became a matter of great controversy within the movement many years later when much of what was discussed was quite aside from the point. However, there did lie behind this controversy a certain amount of reality.

It is clear, to start with, that Stalin was very much preoccupied with the persistence of Trotsky as the principal alternative to himself as leader of the Russian Revolution and was perhaps unduly impressed with the potentialities of the movement which Trotsky was trying to build. The numerous murders of Trotskyist leaders during the late 1930s, culminating in the assassination of Trotsky in August 1940, is proof enough of this fact.

Under those circumstances, it is understandable that Stalin was anxious to penetrate the movement led by Trotsky to the greatest degree possible. He was particularly anxious to know what was going on in the highest circles of movement, and perhaps to influence the attitudes and activities of the International Secretariat and the International Executive Committee of what after September 3, 1938, was officially the Fourth International.

At various times there were at least four people who were associated with the top leadership of the international Trotskyist

movement who were certainly, or almost certainly, GPU agents at the same time. These were Pavel Okin, also known as M. Mill and Jacques Obin; Abraham and Ruvim Sobolevicius, known in Trotskyist circles as Abraham Senin and Roman Well; and Mark Zborowski, who was known within the Trotskyist movement as Etienne. All of these men were Russian-speaking, which was the basis of their gaining the confidence of Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov.

Jean van Heijenoort has written about the first of these, that

Paul Okun, also known as Obin, was a Jew from the southern Ukraine, living as a refugee in Brussels, who had displayed Trotskyist sympathies. Though he did not go to live in Prinkipo, he was soon intimately involved with the work of the International Secretariat. Raymond Molinier arranged for him to come to Paris at the beginning of December 1930. He took the name of Mill. . . . Although Obin did not settle in Prinkipo as a secretary to Trotsky, Raymond Molinier took him there for a visit of several weeks. I heard that Trotsky was fond of exchanging childhood memories in Russian with Mill. Toward the middle of 1932, Obin entered into negotiations with the Soviet Embassy in Paris to return to Russia. He received permission to go back and live in Kharkov, where he had relatives. Who was he—turncoat or spy?⁷⁰

Isaac Deutscher, who mistakenly identified Mill as an "American," seemed less doubtful than Jean van Heijenoort about the man's real identity. He commented that "Mill was presently exposed as a Stalinist."⁷¹ Georges Vereeken was also convinced that while associated with the International Secretariat Mill was already a Stalinist agent. He insisted that Mill contributed substantially to widening the split between Leon Trotsky and Alfred Rosmer which culminated late in 1930 with Rosmer's leaving the Trotskyist movement. Vereeken commented that in this "he thus played the role

which was indicated by his masters of the Soviet bureaucracy."⁷²

Jean van Heijenoort had no doubts about the GPU affiliation of the Sobolevicius brothers. Of them, he says, "Abraham and Ruvim Sobolevicius were Lithuanian Jews who, under the names of Abraham Senin and Roman Well, appeared on the scene as members of the German Trotskyite group in Leipzig in 1929. As is now known, they were then agents of the GPU recruited and trained in 1927. . . . The Sobolevicius brothers rose rapidly in the international organization. Well undertook responsibility for the circulation of the *Bulletin of the Opposition* in Germany. Leon Sedov (Liova) soon came to rely on Well for the circulation of the journal in Russia itself and in the bordering countries, which was far more serious. The two brothers participated in the leadership of the German Trotskyite group and in the work of the International Secretariat."⁷³

Van Heijenoort argued that the Sobolevicius brothers, like Mill, tried through intense factional activity to weaken both the German and International Trotskyist organizations. With regard to the German movement, he said that "many reasons can be cited" for the weakness of that group, "but it may well be that the deceitful intrigues of the Sobolevicius brothers were an important factor."⁷⁴

Trotsky apparently did not suspect the GPU connections of the Sobolevicius brothers. Isaac Deutscher noted that after the defection of Mill from the International Secretariat, "Trotsky then sought to overhaul it with the help of Senin-Sobolevicius and Well."⁷⁵ Later, Deutscher noted that an open break between them and Trotsky occurred in December 1932, when Senin "moved a motion dissociating the International Secretariat of the Opposition from one of Trotsky's sharp attacks on Stalin." Deutscher said that "even now Trotsky suspected no foul play, but thought that Senin was yielding to 'the party's pull' and that this might lead him to capitulation. . . . He evidently regretted losing an intelligent and helpful

follower; but the break was accomplished and soon Lenin disappeared from Trotsky's horizon."⁷⁶ Only after the first Moscow Trial, according to van Heijenoort, did Trotsky come to suspect that "the brothers Well and Lenin" might have been GPU spies in the Trotskyist ranks.⁷⁷

The identity of the Sobolevicius brothers became clear in the 1950s. Roman Well, by then known as Robert Soblen, was involved in the Rosenberg atomic espionage case in 1950 and received a thirty-year jail sentence, of which he served eighteen years. His brother, Abraham, by then going under the name Jack Soblen, was also arrested in the United States in 1957 and received a seven-year jail sentence as a Soviet espionage agent.⁷⁸

The case of Mark Zborowski was, however, the most serious of all. After the rise of Hitler to power, Leon Sedov moved from Berlin to Paris and was for the next five years the most important figure in the International Secretariat. During most of that time Zborowski was his closest associate, and continued after Sedov's death to be a key figure in the International Secretariat.

Jean van Heijenoort has said that "Zborowski had found his way to Liova through the French Trotskyite group. He had joined the group after presenting himself as a student with sympathies for Trotskyism. When Jeannie learned that he knew Russian, she introduced him to Liova."⁷⁹

Zborowski's *modus operandi* was much different from that of the Sobolevicius brothers, who played the role of leaders in the German section and in the International Secretariat. Van Heijenoort observed that "my definite impression is that Zborowski never asked Liova a question that could provoke a political discussion of any sort or lead even to a serious conversation on a serious topic. He was obliging, always willing to fulfill the tasks with which Liova entrusted him. There was nothing you could grapple with in him, except his insignificance."⁸⁰

An American acquaintance of Zborowski-Etienne had somewhat the same impression

of his relationship with Leon Sedov. Albert Glotzer met him in 1934 in Sedov's office in the International Secretariat in Paris. He recalled that during several meetings with Sedov, Etienne was always present, but since he spoke only French and Russian and Glotzer spoke neither, the two men never conversed. Nonetheless, at each meeting Zborowski was able to overhear the conversation. Glotzer was told at the time that Zborowski was a member of the French Section, edited the Russian *Bulletin*, and was a close friend of Sedov.⁸¹

Zborowski was thought to be implicated in the deaths of several of the Trotskyist leaders who died at the hands of the GPU. Jean van Heijenoort noted, with regard to Leon Sedov's fatal decision when he fell ill to go to a Russian clinic "which in Paris in 1938 could only have been staffed with White Russians and Stalinist agents," that "Zborowski could hardly have failed to strengthen him in this decision." Van Heijenoort noted that Zborowski "is today known to have been a Stalinist spy."⁸²

Isaac Deutscher suggested the possibility that Zborowski was also associated with the murder of Rudolf Klement. Speculating on the reasons for the GPU's deciding to get rid of Klement, Deutscher asked, "Had he recently come into possession of some important GPU secret? Had he been on the track of their *agent provocateur*, perhaps about to unmask him . . . ?" Here and elsewhere, Deutscher used the phrase *agent provocateur* to refer to Zborowski.⁸³

In retrospect, an American who was one of the last people to see Klement alive also suspected that Zborowski was probably the person who got rid of him. Emanuel Geltman, then in Paris in connection with preparatory work for the Founding Conference, attended a meeting at which Zborowski and Klement were both present. Geltman walked some distance with these two after the meeting broke up and finally Zborowski and Klement went off together. Geltman noted that Klement was never seen alive again, and that his body was found, grue-

somely butchered, in the Seine several days later.⁸⁴

Geltman was also convinced that Zborowski arranged for the murder of Ignaz Reiss, the GPU agent who defected to the Trotskyists. Georges Vereeken had the same suspicion.⁸⁵

Zborowski survived to migrate to the United States, where he gained some fame as an anthropologist. In September 1955, former GPU General Alexander Orlov testified before the Internal Security Subcommittee of the United States Senate concerning Zborowski's having been a GPU agent, noting that he had been considered of sufficient importance for the GPU to keep Stalin personally informed of his activities.⁸⁶ Five months later, Zborowski himself testified before the same Senate committee. He admitted that he had been a GPU agent during the period of his association with Leon Sedov and the International Secretariat, although he sought to downplay the importance of his role. Neither the senators on the committee nor Robert Morris, their counsel, had sufficient interest in International Trotskyism, apparently, to push Zborowski very hard on the subject.⁸⁷

After his denunciation by Orlov, Zborowski sought out three old Paris acquaintances then living in the United States, David and Lola Dallin and Elsa Reiss, the widow of the GPU agent Ignaz Reiss, who had defected to the Trotskyists and then been murdered by his ex-comrades of the Soviet secret police. Zborowski sought to "explain" his actions as a GPU agent. He submitted himself to an extensive interrogation by his three former Paris acquaintances, on which David Dallin took extensive notes.⁸⁸

Both in his senate testimony and his discussion with the Dallins and Mrs. Reiss, Zborowski specifically claimed "not to remember" having given the GPU information about three people with the deaths of whom his Trotskyist former friends suspected that he was involved, and who certainly died at the hands of the GPU. These were the cases

of Rudolf Klement, Erwin Wolf and Walter Held. He also professed to have had nothing to do with the selection of the White Russian clinic where Leon Sedov died under mysterious circumstances after an appendicitis operation; nor, he claimed, did he inform the GPU of Sedov's whereabouts.

By the time that the Founding Conference of the Fourth International met, Zborowski was already suspected by some of those associated with him of being a GPU agent. Hendrik Sneevliet had publicly accused him, a fact which Zborowski duly reported to Trotsky.⁸⁹

About this same time, Trotsky had received direct (although anonymous) evidence of the fact that Zborowski was a GPU agent. Alexander Orlov, who had been chief GPU agent in Spain and defected to the United States, reaching there in August 1938, wrote Trotsky a letter from Philadelphia dated September 27, 1938, warning him about Zborowski. However, Orlov did not identify himself in the letter.

Perhaps because of the anonymous nature of the information he received, Trotsky appears to have taken no action on the basis of it. Yet the identification of Zborowski could hardly have been clearer. Orlov wrote that "this agent provocateur has for a long time been the collaborator of your son Leon Sedov."

Orlov said that he was not sure of the last name of the man involved, but that his first name was Mark. Orlov went on: "He was literally the shadow of Sedov; he informed the Cheka of every step of Sedov, even his personal activities and correspondence, which the Provocateur reads with his approval. This provocateur has won the total confidence of your son and he knows through him all about the activities of your organization. Thanks to him, many Chekists have been decorated. This provocateur worked until 1938 in the archives of the Institute of the well-known Menshevik Nikolaievsky in Paris and perhaps still works there. It is this Mark who stole a part of your

archives from the apartment of Nicolaievsky. . . . These documents have been transferred to Moscow. . . . This agent provocateur is between thirty-two and thirty-five years of age. He is a Jew, born in the Russian part of Poland, writes Russian well. He wears glasses. He is married and he has a baby."⁹⁰

Apparently the suspicions about Zborowski were sufficiently great that his Trotskyist associates did not want to continue him in his role in the leadership of the Fourth International. According to Rodolphe Prager, Zborowski was brought to the Founding Conference at the last minute and attended its sessions. However, when he suggested that he ought to be a member of the International Executive Committee elected at the September 3, 1938, meeting, as a representative of the Russian Section, his suggestion was rejected.⁹¹

If Mark Zborowski and the GPU had the objective of preventing the formal establishment of a Trotskyist Fourth International, they certainly did not succeed in doing so. However, they almost certainly did contribute to making it a less potent and extensive organization than it might otherwise have been.

The Fourth International: The Fourth International During World War II

The Founding Conference of the Fourth International (FI), in view of the likelihood that a new world war would break out shortly, had provided that the International should be prepared for that eventuality. It had decided that when the conflict commenced the headquarters should be transferred to the United States, and that a Resident International Executive Committee (IEC) should be established there to direct it.¹

The New York Secretariat

Problems of the Resident IEC

In conformity with this decision the seat of the Fourth International was shifted from Paris to New York City soon after the war broke out. The Secretariat of the International held its first meeting in New York in September 1939. Those attending, according to the minutes of the session were Mario Pedrosa (Lebrun) of Brazil, Jan Frankel (Anton) of Czechoslovakia, Max Shachtman (Trent), C. L. R. James (Johnson), James Cannon (Martel), and Sam Gordon (Stuart). Absent members of the International Executive Committee included Albert Goldman (Fauchois), who was in Paris, Oskar Fischer (Schussler), and Leon Trotsky (O'Brien or Cruz).²

The new Resident International Executive Committee, named soon afterward to direct the affairs of the FI, consisted of four people: Max Shachtman of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States; Mario Pedrosa, a founder of Brazilian Trotskyism; Jan Frankel, an original Czech Trotskyist

and one-time secretary of Leon Trotsky, and C. L. R. James, a native of Trinidad, one of the early leaders of British Trotskyism, who had recently moved to the United States.³

It was also provided that other members of the International Executive Committee elected at the Founding Conference should be "consulted" on important issues. The only ones who proved to be available for consultation were James Cannon and Vincent Dunne of the *swp*, the German Oskar Fischer, and Trotsky.⁴

The members of the Resident *IEC* were supposed to serve as the Secretariat of the International. In addition, Sam Gordon of the *swp* was assigned to be "administrative secretary" for the Resident *IEC*.⁵

Subsequently, the members of the Resident International Executive Committee were severely criticized by the Emergency Conference of the International held in May 1940. It was alleged that "they not only did not see to it that meetings were held and questions of international discipline or of international aid in moderating the struggle in the *swp* were taken up, but on the contrary, they failed to respond when called to order by the administrative secretary of the committee whose selection they unanimously endorsed."

Even more serious than these charges was the fact that the four members of the Resident International Executive Committee sided with the dissidents within the *swp* of the United States in the 1939-40 factional struggle. The same "statement" of the Emergency Conference already cited said that "when the danger of split threatened the *swp*, they took sides with the splitters and joined them in the unheard of proposition of allowing a group within the International to issue a public organ with a line of policy contrary to the principles of the Fourth International."⁶

In view of this situation, those opposed to the Resident International Executive Committee arranged for the summoning of an emergency conference of the Fourth International. That conference was called by the

swp and the Mexican and Canadian Sections of the International, and was officially endorsed by Trotsky, Fischer, Cannon, and Dunne.⁷

The 1940 Emergency Conference

The Emergency Conference met in New York City May 19-26, 1940. It was claimed that there were "mandated representatives" from the United States, Canadian, Mexican, Spanish, Belgian, Puerto Rican, Cuban, German, Australian, and Chilean sections, and that "statements" were received from those of Argentina and Uruguay.⁸ It met at a time when the German armies had already overrun Belgium, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands and were rapidly breaking the backbone of the French army in the Battle of France.

The Emergency Conference had several purposes. One was to adopt a position for the International on the latest developments of the war. Another was to receive reports on the status of the various affiliates of the organization in view of the latest turn of events. Finally, and of most immediate importance for the organization, the conference had to replace the members of the Resident International Executive Committee who had defected as a result of the Shachtmanite split in the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

Trotsky, although unable to be physically present, presented in writing what was destined to be his last programmatic statement. This was the manifesto entitled "The Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution," issued by the conference.

The document started by noting that "Germany has unloosed all the furies of hell in a major offensive to which the Allies are replying in kind with all their forces of destruction," and noted that "the Fourth International considers that now is the time to say openly and clearly how it views this war and its participants, how it evaluates the war policies of various labor organizations,

and most important, what is the way out to peace, freedom and plenty."

The manifesto declared that the Fourth International was not directing its message to "the governments who have dragooned the peoples into the slaughter," or to bourgeois politicians or the "labor bureaucracy" but to "the working men and women, the soldiers and sailors, the ruined peasants and to the enslaved peoples." It proclaimed that the Fourth International had no connections with the government, the bourgeoisie, or the labor bureaucrats, but was "the world party of the toilers, the oppressed, and the exploited."⁹

After sketching the history of capitalism between the two world wars and particularly the impact of the world Depression the manifesto claimed that "in order to enrich themselves further, the capitalists are destroying and laying waste to everything created by the labor of centuries."¹⁰ It asserted that "contrary to the official fables designed to drug the people, the chief cause of war as of all other social evils—unemployment, the high cost of living, fascism, colonial oppression—is the private ownership of the means of production together with the bourgeois state which rests on this foundation." It concluded that "the immediate cause of the present war is the rivalry between the old wealthy colonial empires, Great Britain and France, and the belated imperialist plunderers, Germany and Italy."¹¹

The manifesto saw the United States as emerging as the most powerful capitalist country, and as inevitably confronting Germany and Japan. It contrasted Roosevelt's position of favoring help to the European Allies with that of the isolationists, equally concerned with the hegemony of the United States in world capitalism but favoring, it claimed, confrontation first with the Japanese. It observed that "our struggle against United States intervention into the war has nothing in common with isolationism and pacifism. . . . The dispute within the ruling class involves only the question of when to enter the war and against whom to level the

fire first. . . . The real struggle against war means the class struggle against imperialism and a merciless exposure of petty-bourgeois pacifism." On this point it concluded that "only revolution could prevent the American bourgeoisie from intervening in the second imperialist war or beginning the third imperialist war. All other methods are either charlatanism or stupidity or a combination of both."¹²

The Fourth International document rejected "both the defense of the fatherland and the struggle for democracy" as Allied justifications for the war. It likewise commented that "Hitler's official slogans in general do not warrant examination."¹³

The manifesto emphasized the Fourth International's determination to defend the Soviet Union in its own way. In contrast to Trotsky's earlier strong defense of the USSR's attack on Finland, it said that "The invasion of Finland unquestionably aroused on the part of the Soviet populace profound condemnation," but added that "the advanced workers understood that the crimes of the Kremlin oligarchy do not strike off the agenda the question of the existence of the USSR. Its defeat in the world war would signify not merely the overthrow of the totalitarian bureaucracy but the liquidation of the new forms of property, the collapse of the first experiment in planned economy, and the transformation of the entire country into a colony. . . . Neither the people of the USSR nor the world working class as a whole care for such an outcome."¹⁴

The document added that "the Fourth International can defend the USSR only by the methods of revolutionary class struggle. . . . While waging a tireless struggle against the Moscow oligarchy, the Fourth International decisively rejects any policy that would aid imperialism against the USSR. The defense of the USSR coincides in principle with the preparation of the world proletarian revolution."¹⁵ It called for "the revolutionary overthrow of Stalin's Bonapartist clique."¹⁶

The Fourth International went on to proclaim that "by its very creation of enormous

difficulties and dangers for the imperialist metropolitan centers, the war opens up wide possibilities for the oppressed peoples. The rumbling of cannon in Europe heralds the approaching hour of their liberation."¹⁷ After special reference to the situations in China, India and Latin America, the manifesto noted that "the perspective of the permanent revolution in no case signifies that the backward countries must await the signal from the advanced ones, or that the colonial peoples should patiently wait for the proletariat of the metropolitan centers to free them. . . . Workers must develop the revolutionary struggle in every country, colonial or imperialist, where favorable conditions have been established, and through this set an example for the workers of other countries."¹⁸

After an extensive survey of the historical inadequacies of the Second and Third Internationals (and even of the anarchists), the document proclaimed that "the Fourth International is the only organization that correctly predicted the general course of world events, that anticipated the inevitability of a new imperialist catastrophe and exposed the pacifist frauds of the bourgeois democrats and the petty-bourgeois adventurers of the Stalinist school, that fought against the policy of class collaboration. . . . The Fourth International builds its program upon the granite theoretical foundations of Marxism. . . . Our program is formulated in a series of documents accessible to everyone. The gist of it can be summed up in two words: *proletarian dictatorship*."

The document set forth a long-range perspective for the Fourth International. It said:

The capitalist world has no way out, unless a prolonged death agony is so considered. It is necessary to prepare for long years, if not decades, of war, uprisings, brief interludes of truce, new wars, and new uprisings. A young revolutionary party must base itself on this perspective. . . . The swifter the ranks of the vanguard

are fused, the more the epoch of bloody convulsions will be shortened, the less destruction will our planet suffer. But the great historical problem will not be solved in any case until a revolutionary party stands at the head of the proletariat. . . . The conclusion is a simple one: it is necessary to carry on the work of educating and organizing the proletarian vanguard with ten-fold energy. Precisely in this lies the task of the Fourth International.¹⁹

The perspective of the Fourth International was a bright one, according to the manifesto of the Emergency Conference: "The Fourth International in numbers and especially in preparation possesses infinite advantages over its predecessors at the beginning of the last war. The Fourth International is the direct heir of Bolshevism in its flower. The Fourth International has absorbed the tradition of the October Revolution and has transmuted into theory the experience of the richest historical period between the two imperialist wars. It has faith in itself and its future."²⁰

In a peroration this document set down the line which in fact the Fourth Internationalists were to follow in the next five years:

At the same time we do not forget for a moment that this war is not our war. In contradistinction to the Second and Third Internationals, the Fourth International builds its policy not on the military fortunes of the capitalist states but on the transformation of the imperialist war into a war of the workers against the capitalists, on the overthrow of the ruling classes of all countries, on the world revolution. . . . Independently of the course of the war, we fulfill our basic task: we explain to the workers the irremediability between their interests and the interests of bloodthirsty capitalism; we mobilize the toilers against imperialism; we propagate the unity of the workers in all warring and neutral countries; we call for the frat-

ernization of workers and soldiers within each country, and of soldiers with soldiers on the opposite side of the battle front. . . .

The document ended: "This is our program. Proletarians of the world, there is no other way out except to unite under the banner of the Fourth International!"²¹

Other documents emanating from the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International included organizational reports on the situations in the French, British, German, Canadian, and Latin American sections of the organization. There were also resolutions on the split in the SWP and a de facto rejection of the Shachtmanite Workers Party's request to be represented at the meeting. Finally, there was a greeting to Leon and Natalia Trotsky, congratulating them on having escaped the first attempt on their lives by the GPU, which took place while the Emergency Conference was still in session.

The Functioning of the Fourth International in New York

The organizational reports to the Emergency Conference reflected the tenuous contacts which the center of the Fourth International had with its sections. Indeed, for most of the next half decade the task of trying to maintain some kind of coherent international organization was an exceedingly difficult one for the Trotskyists. Most of the national sections, those in Europe, were soon suffering the severest persecution at the hands of the Nazis and indigenous fascist regimes. Similarly, the Chinese Trotskyists were being repressed by all of the conflicting elements in that country—the Japanese, the Kuomintang, and the Stalinists. The Ceylonese party was driven largely underground as was the small group in India. Contacts were even difficult, except perhaps in the case of Mexico, with the scattered Trotskyist groups in Latin America.

Soon after the Emergency Conference, Jean van Heijenoort became the principal member of the Secretariat of the Fourth International. He was a young French Trotskyist who had for almost a decade been a secretary of Leon Trotsky in Turkey, France, and then again in Mexico. He had come to the United States in 1939 and served during most of World War II as head of the Fourth International Secretariat.²²

Rodolphe Prager has noted that "the presence of Jean van Heijenoort contributed to assuring a certain continuity and legitimacy to the st. He was the best-informed, insofar as the experience of the international Trotskyist movement and knowledge of its sections were concerned, as a result of his long collaboration with Trotsky, which gave him a certain notoriety. His political contributions, his studies of conflict and European problems . . . gave him authority. . . ."²³

During this period van Heijenoort had two principal assistants. In the beginning, his aide was Sam Gordon, who in 1939 had been appointed "administrative secretary." However, Gordon was a sailor and went off to sea, and he was succeeded by Bert Cochran, also a leader of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.²⁴ For short periods, a German, Ludwig (Suhl); a Russian who passed as a Mexican-American, A. Gonzalez; and an American, Charles Curtiss, also served with the Fourth International New York headquarters.²⁵

The work of the International Secretariat consisted mainly of correspondence with the Trotskyist groups in Latin America, Great Britain, China, Australia, and for a considerable period, France. Contact with the French Trotskyists was maintained through the port of Marseilles via American Trotskyist sailors until the end of 1942. After the Germans militarily took over "unoccupied" France and seized Marseilles, such contacts were ended.

As a result of the break in relations with the French Trotskyists the International Secretariat found it hard to keep track of

what was happening in the Trotskyist movement in continental Europe. As a consequence, for instance, the New York headquarters did not know about the European Conference of its affiliates held early in 1944 until many months later.

Cut off from its affiliates in Europe, the Fourth International headquarters in New York perforce had to devote much of its attention to those sections outside the area controlled by the Axis powers. There was extensive correspondence with the British section, particularly about the question of the Trotskyists' entering the Labor Party. Van Heijenoort even wrote articles under pseudonyms about the British Trotskyists' situation.

A good deal of the International Secretariat's correspondence during the war was with its Latin American affiliates, particularly those of Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Cuba. In the case of Argentina, much of the Secretariat's activities concerned internal disputes within the section there, centering on Liborio Justo (Quebracho).²⁶

Although he was usually not officially a member of the International Executive Committee or the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, Terence Phelan (Sherry Mangan) played a key role in maintaining contacts between the New York headquarters and various national Trotskyist groups. He was a foreign correspondent working for the Life-Time-Fortune group and traveled widely in various parts of the world.

Phelan seemed an unlikely Trotskyist contact man. He made full use of his expense account as an envoy of the Henry Luce empire to live well in not-too-modest hotels and had an outgoing personality. He lived a double life, writing for the Luce publications as Terence Phelan and at the same time reporting to the Fourth International and writing for its publications as Sherry Mangan.²⁷

In the immediate prewar period, Phelan was stationed in Paris. He served (certainly surreptitiously) as a "technical secretary"

for the International Secretariat of the Fourth International in 1938-39. Rodolphe Prager has noted that "in his capacity as a journalist, he could carry out very useful tasks when the French organization had to enter into clandestinity." Prager added that "his reports from Paris, a deserted city, which he was one of the rare people not to abandon, just before the entry of the German troops, were very successful. He helped with the reconstitution of the Trotskyist organization in the first weeks of the occupation, until his expulsion by the Nazis on August 17, 1940."²⁸

Subsequently, Phelan was assigned as a Time-Life-Fortune journalist in South America. There he intervened extensively in efforts to reunite divided Trotskyist groups in Argentina and Chile and he had some temporary success in this endeavor.²⁹

United States sailors belonging to the Socialist Workers Party were another important contact between the International headquarters in New York and Trotskyist groups in various countries. Rodolphe Prager has noted that "The 'maritime fraction' of the party grew considerably during the war, and included between a hundred and a hundred fifty militants, who . . . transmitted information and documents to their comrades in India, Australia, South Africa, the Antilles, Cuba, Great Britain, France and Italy. . . . Seven militants perished in the high seas." Prager noted that the ranks of these American Trotskyist seamen included Joseph Hansen, Sam Gordon, Frank Lovell, and George Clark.³⁰

There was one American Trotskyist sailor who reported to the International Secretariat after making runs to Murmansk. Once he stayed several months in Murmansk. This sailor had nothing to report on the Soviet Opposition, because there were none of them left. But he reported on the working and living conditions of the USSR, and on the attitudes of the local people, about what he heard from them about the progress of the war. The Fourth International was well-

informed about Murmansk, even though this was not of particular relevance to the International's cause.³¹

At one point, *La Verité*, the French underground Trotskyist paper, reported that Jean van Heijenoort had gone to the Soviet Union to support the USSR in its military struggle against the Nazis. Of this, van Heijenoort wrote that "the information in *La Verité* is, of course, incorrect. Sometime in 1941 the Russian press (*Pravda*) published a short item (a few lines) stating that I had enlisted in the Red Army. I have never seen the item myself, but it was reported to me by various persons. This was perhaps a trick contrived by Stalin-Beria in order to rally some Trotskyites for the regime."³²

Another activity of the New York headquarters of the Fourth International was the issuance from time to time of the *International Bulletin*, which was distributed to all of the sections with which the International Secretariat was able to maintain contact. Three numbers of the *Bulletin* were issued in 1940, four in 1941, two in 1942, none in 1943, and only one each in 1944 and 1945. Rodolphe Prager has suggested that growing differences of Jean van Heijenoort with the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party explain the paucity of issues of the *Bulletin* during the last years of the war.³³

Manifestos of the International Committee of the FI

The International Executive issued a number of public documents dealing with current problems in various parts of the world during the war. Several of these statements are worthy of note.

In November 1940 the International published a "manifesto" entitled "France Under Hitler and Pétain," which was written by Jean van Heijenoort.³⁴ After a brief survey of the circumstances of the fall of France and the resulting collaboration of the French bourgeoisie with the Nazi conquerors, the proclamation concluded that "the experi-

ence of France shows once and for all that the 'national' considerations serve only to mask the interests of the bourgeoisie, which is always ready to change sides when that serves to safeguard its interests. Let the workers remember the lesson that the bourgeoisie has given them once and for all!"³⁵

In contrast to the belief widely held in France at the time, the manifesto proclaimed that "the present situation will not be of long duration. Heretofore, the successes of Hitler have been due to the weakness and decline of the democracies. The real test of the Nazi system has only begun." It added that "to the fascist 'reconstruction' of Europe. . . we juxtapose the United Soviet States of Europe, a free federation of peoples with a socialized economy or a system in which profit will be replaced by the cooperation of the workers. . . . The French State of Pétain has replaced the III Republic of Daladier. The latter has entered into the past and nothing can revive it. To emerge from servitude, oppression and misery, there is only one way, to establish a workers and peasants government."³⁶

The peroration of this document reiterated this argument, which was to be the fundamental position of the Trotskyists in all of the European countries occupied by the Nazis. It said, "An entire epoch has entered into the past, that of decadent bourgeois democracy. It has taken with it the bourgeois democratic parties and their leaders, as well as the working class parties and leaders who have tied their fate to that of 'democracy.' We have entered a new epoch, that of the struggles and convulsions of the agony of capitalism. But that new epoch is also that of the Fourth International and of its triumph."³⁷

On March 31, 1941 the International adopted a resolution on "The American Intervention in China" which it also widely circulated. This was apparently written by Frank Graves and Harold Isaacs.³⁸ This document argued that recent announcement of substantial aid by the United States for the

Chiang Kai-shek regime's war against Japan was part of the grand imperialist strategy of the United States. The document argued that "Pursuing its 'manifest destiny,' American imperialism is preparing to occupy the positions of the British Empire, including China, in the Far East, and to assure the defeat of its Japanese rival in the Pacific. Washington proposes to defeat Japan in war, to chase the Japanese imperialists from China and to exercise its own suzerainty over the Chinese people. . . ."³⁹

The Fourth International therefore warned the Chinese workers against the implications of United States "aid" to China in the war then in progress. However, although denouncing the supposed intentions of the Chiang Kai-shek government to accept U.S. suzerainty in place of that of Japan, the Fourth International proclaimed that "revolutionaries . . . will not 'punish' Chiang Kai-shek by declaring themselves 'defeatists' in the war of China against Japan. They will continue to support the defense of China in spite of and against the Chinese bourgeoisie."⁴⁰

Finally, the Fourth International statement painted the perspective of a forthcoming revolution throughout East Asia. It proclaimed that "every major defeat that Japan suffers in consequence of American intervention in the Far East will create revolutionary movements among the masses of Manchukuo, Korea, Formosa, and will stimulate a revolutionary renewal in China. Confronted with the expansion of the revolutionary uprising, the American imperialists will become less preoccupied with combatting Japan than with suppressing an independent movement of the masses which will menace the whole of their position. Just as the war against Japan has brought Chiang Kai-shek to become an instrument of American imperialism, the masses of China, allied with their class brothers in the Japanese Empire, will advance in the direction of social revolution."⁴¹

After the Soviet Union was invaded by

Nazi troops the Fourth International issued in August 1941 a document entitled "Manifesto: For the Defense of the USSR!" written by Jean van Heijenoort.⁴² This began, "The USSR is at war. The USSR is in mortal danger. In his desperate struggle to open the world to German imperialism, Hitler has turned towards the East, hoping for a rapid victory to reinforce his military and economic positions. In the hour of supreme danger, the IV International proclaims what it has constantly said to the workers: For the defense of the USSR! To defend the Soviet Union is the elementary duty of all workers loyal to their class."

The manifesto repeated the classic Trotskyist criticism of the "Soviet bureaucracy" and Stalin, arguing that they were largely responsible for the situation facing the Soviet Union because of their betrayal of the revolution, both at home and abroad through the Comintern. It was very critical of Stalin's latest turn toward an alliance with Churchill and Roosevelt, and his fighting the war under the banner of Russian nationalism rather than of world revolution.

However, the Fourth International document claimed that "in spite of all the crimes of the bureaucracy, the revolution of October, which led all of the peoples of Russia to a new life, is not yet dead. The worker and the kolkhoznik know well what would be the significance of the victory of Hitler: it would be the seizure of the economy by the German trusts and cartels, the transformation of the country into a colony, the end of the first experiment of a planned economy outside of the system of capitalist profit, the ruin of all hopes. That they are not going to permit."

As for the Fourth International's own position, the document said that "what the Soviet worker discerns with his class instinct, the IV International has not ceased to proclaim: *For the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union!* We defend the USSR independently of the betrayals of the bureaucracy and in spite of its betrayals. We do not insist as a condition of our support

such or such a concession on the part of the Stalinist bureaucracy. But we defend the USSR with our methods. We represent the revolutionary interests of the proletariat, and our aim is the revolutionary class struggle. The imperialist allies of the Kremlin are not our allies. *We continue the revolutionary combat, including that in the 'democratic' camp.*"⁴³

The manifesto made separate appeals to the workers of the different warring countries. Insofar as the Western Allies were concerned it proclaimed that "to support the imperialist sectors of England or the United States would be to aid Hitler to maintain his control over the German workers. We emphasize the revolution, and the best means of serving the revolutionary future of the German workers is to seek to expand the proletarian struggles in the opposed camp."

Within Germany and Occupied Europe "the defense of the Soviet Union signifies directly the *sabotage of the German war machine.*" Furthermore, "The Fourth International calls on the German workers and peasants in uniform to pass over, with arms and baggage to the ranks of the Red Army."

Insofar as the USSR was concerned, "The IV International calls upon the Soviet workers to *be the best soldiers* at their combat posts." It further called on them to be inspired by the memory of Trotsky's leadership during the Civil War.⁴⁴ As for the struggle against Stalin, the Fourth International proclamation said that "the war does not end our struggle against the bureaucrats, but makes this struggle more necessary than ever. For the defense of the USSR, formation of soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers. That is our rallying cry. But our struggle against the bureaucracy remains subordinate to the war against imperialism." It must remain a political struggle and "the assembling of cadres and organization of the Soviet section of the IV International" was proclaimed to be "the first task of the present hour."⁴⁵

On September 26, 1942, following breakdown of the negotiations between the Brit-

ish government, represented by Sir Stafford Cripps, and the leaders of the Indian National Congress, and the declaration by the Congress of a campaign of civil disobedience against the British, the Fourth International issued a "Manifesto to the Workers and Peasants of India." According to Rodolphe Prager, this document was largely written by Felix Morrow of the U.S. swp.⁴⁶

This manifesto cited early proclamations of the Fourth International and Trotsky in support of the Indian independence movement. It also warned against trusting the "bourgeois" leaders of the Indian National Congress, citing their earlier refusal to embarrass the British during the war, and particularly condemned the position of the Indian Stalinists who, since the invasion of the Soviet Union by the Nazis, had thrown all their weight in favor of Indian cooperation with the British war effort. It particularly warned against "mediation" by the U.S. government. The Fourth International Manifesto also warned against any alliance with the Japanese imperialists to fight the British. It cited a statement of the Indian section on this subject.

The manifesto emphasized the key role of the world revolutionary struggle. It insisted that, as Russia had been the weakest link in the capitalist chain during World War I, India was the weakest link during the Second World War. It said to the Indian workers, "Break the weakest link in the imperialist chain and the peoples of the entire world will follow you and join you in the struggle!"⁴⁷ Emphasizing again the world revolutionary struggle, the Fourth International insisted that the British workers would support the fight for Indian independence, stressing that recent strikes in Britain had indicated general discontent there. It also argued that British workers who were serving as soldiers in India would not fire on Indian revolutionists, as the Russian Cossacks had refused to fire on Russian revolutionaries in 1917. Rather than the civil disobedience of the Indian National Congress, the Fourth International urged the Indian

workers to undertake the class struggle against both imperialism and the Indian capitalists. The manifesto stressed particularly the slogans of agrarian reform, a constituent assembly, and a large-scale industrialization program for India.

Finally, the Fourth International insisted on the need for a vanguard party to lead the Indian revolution. "That party exists today in India! It is the Bolshevik-Leninist Party, Indian Section of the IV International." It ended, "Indian workers and peasants, be sure that, on all continents, the sections of the IV International defend your struggle, unmasking the lies of imperialism and calling upon the workers and peasants to take their places at your side."⁴⁸

The final document of the Fourth International which we wish to note is that provoked by Stalin's dissolution of the Comintern, and issued on June 12, 1943. It is not clear who was the author of the "Manifesto on the Dissolution of the Comintern."

This manifesto traced the customary Trotskyist indictment of the conversion of the Comintern from the general staff of the world revolution into the tool of the foreign policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy, dedicated to thwarting rather than leading the world revolution. The dissolution of the Comintern by Stalin without any authorization from the rank and file of the organization merely confirmed this analysis, the manifesto claimed.

However, the end of the Comintern should not be a cause for despair of revolutionaries. "The fall of the {Socialist} International in 1914 left the workers vanguard destitute. . . . This time, the vanguard is perfectly alerted. On all the continents and in all the principal countries there existed cadres of the IV International well before the war began. Everywhere they have passed the decisive test of the war and have remained loyal to revolutionary internationalism."⁴⁹

This proclamation ended, "Comrade workers, the workers need today, more than ever, the International to lead them. There is only one International, the world party of

the socialist revolution, the IV International. Join its ranks and prepare yourselves with it to direct the victorious struggle for the world revolution."⁵⁰

The Fourth International's Wartime Line

The general line of the Fourth International during World War II was well reflected in these statements of its International Executive Committee. It followed closely the position which the founder of the International, Trotsky, had preached during the years in which he had nursed the organization into existence.

First of all, except in the cases of the Soviet Union and China, the Fourth International preached "defeatism" to the workers of all of the warring countries. World War II was simply presented as a continuation of World War I, a mere struggle among imperialist nations over markets and colonies with the victory of neither side being advantageous to the workers. Therefore, the International advocated opposition on the part of the workers of all capitalist nations to participation of their own countries in the war. The only exception to this was China, where the war was seen as a struggle of a "semi-colonial" nation against an imperialist aggressor and therefore worthy of support, but without the workers and peasants giving any political backing to the Chiang Kai-shek regime.

Second, the policy of the International was one of insisting on the essential similarity of the democratic and fascist regimes. Both were instruments of control by the bourgeoisie, which stood quite ready to cast aside all democratic pretense and install fascism when to do so would serve its interests. In conformity with this argument the proclamations of the International tended to exaggerate the degree to which the democratic system was being destroyed by the governments of the Allied countries, and particularly the degree to which Trotskyist groups were being persecuted by the Allied regimes.

Following from the alleged sameness of the democratic and fascist regimes, the Fourth International vehemently opposed all loyalty of workers to their particular nation. Even in the cases of the Nazi-occupied nations of Europe and of China, the struggle against the military occupation should always be carried out in the name of the world working-class revolution, never in terms of defense of their homelands.

Another constant theme throughout all of the Fourth International's wartime propaganda, as reflected in the documents we have cited, was that of converting the international war into a civil war in each belligerent country. This position was closely linked to the belief that World War II and World War I were essentially the same, so that the position advocated by Lenin and Trotsky in the first conflict was equally applicable to the second one.

"Defense of the Soviet Union" was another constant in the International's wartime position. Without giving up the struggle against the Stalinist "bureaucratic" regime in the USSR, that struggle had to be subordinated for the time being to the military defense of the country. However, outside the Soviet Union, it was argued, the best defense of it was to be found in the spread of the world revolution, which would bring about the fall not only of all major capitalist regimes but also of the Stalinist bureaucracy itself. A lighting of the fires of revolution in the capitalist countries, it was argued, would rekindle the same blaze in the USSR itself, bringing about the reestablishment there of the "workers democracy" which had been destroyed by Stalin and the bureaucrats.

Another fundamental position of the Fourth International during the war was the insistence on the conflict's signaling the death of international capitalism. The capitalist system could not survive the war as the dominant economic, social and political world order. On the contrary, it would inevitably be swept away by the proletarian revolution.

The Trotskyists also argued that along with capitalism, the Second and Third Internationals were doomed because of their long history of aiding and abetting international capitalism. The Fourth International constantly insisted that the workers had learned the lesson that they could no longer depend on the leadership of the traditional working-class parties and were now turning their backs on those parties and eagerly seeking new leadership.

These assertions inevitably led the Fourth International leaders to the conclusion that the future was in the hands of their movement. Admitting their present weakness, they argued that as the revolutionary situation developed, the national sections of the "world party of the Socialist Revolution" would rapidly expand with that situation and the workers would inevitably turn to them for leadership. In spite of their weakness in numbers, it was argued, the sections of the Fourth International and the "world party" itself were eminently prepared to seize this leadership because only they had consistently had the correct revolutionary line and had foreseen the events which had led up to the war and which would result from it. Furthermore, they had already developed the leadership cadres which were necessary to put into execution the correct line of the Fourth International.

Weaknesses of the Fourth International Position

The French Trotskyist historian Rodolphe Prager, in his introduction to a volume on the Fourth International during the war, commented on the ways in which the International's wartime position proved to be in error. He started by commenting that "what perhaps most strikes one from reading the texts in this book is the divorce between certain perspectives and the postwar realities. Marxist foresight is an indispensable tool for action, but one which, if well understood, has its limits. It defines the characteristics of a period and the probable develop-

ments which guide political action and the choice of slogans. It is by no means a prophecy which pretends to describe the future, which will always be infinitely richer, more unexpected and more capricious than the best predictions."⁵¹

Prager noted at least three areas of misjudgment of the Fourth International leadership. These were the survivability of Stalin and the Soviet bureaucracy, the loyalty of the workers to nationalist conceptions, and their loyalty to the traditional workers parties and union movements.

Concerning the first of these issues, Prager noted that "a crucial point, difficult to understand, touches the capacity of resistance of the Soviet bureaucracy in such a storm. As a transitory phenomenon, with little stability, supported by certain international forces, the power of the bureaucracy did not seem able to survive such an upheaval, in the opinion of Trotsky. In that hypothesis, Stalinism must suffer a fatal coup which would increase the chances of the Fourth International to change into a mass organization."⁵²

Such did not turn out to be the case. Prager noted that "after making numerous errors and finding itself on the edge of destruction during the smashing offensives of the Wehrmacht, the general shocks suffered by imperialism allowed the bureaucracy to emerge reinforced from the war. The prestige of Stalinism, its hold on the masses, and then its counter-revolutionary capacity accrued to a degree unknown until then. . . . This is one of the factors which limited the fundamental [revolutionary] wave of 1943-1947, and which checked it. . . ."⁵³

Nor did the Trotskyists foresee the hold of nationalism on the working class of the countries occupied by the Nazis. Prager noted that "upon coming out of the Nazi terror, the deportations and summary executions, aroused nationalist sentiment was widely diffused across class frontiers. The enthusiasm for the Liberation and the delirious reception of the 'liberators' left little

room for anti-imperialism." Prager added that "because of this, aroused in part by the ultra-chauvinist campaigns of Stalinism, imbued by its new role as a party of the government, the impact of revolutionary action was limited."⁵⁴

Finally, the Fourth International misjudged the loyalty of the workers of Europe to the traditional working-class parties, according to Prager. He noted that "the workers don't change organizations in the way they change their brand of automobile. It is not sufficient, to make them move, just to brandish a new flag, a new program, no matter how correct it may be. Even if dissatisfied and distrustful with regard to the party to which they belong, they only resort to change in the last extremity."

Prager explained why this was so: "It is for the simple reason that these organizations constitute their instruments of daily defense and struggle, which they are only willing to replace if they appear to be irremediably weakened, and if a new group, sufficiently strong and credible, having already proven itself, is able to attempt to take their place."⁵⁵

He added that, insofar as the development of the Fourth International sections into parties which could supplant those of the Second and Third Internationals was concerned, it could not be done "by the simple means of progressive expansion." Rather, "the development of such parties presupposes that the traditional organizations are so enfeebled by profound crisis, as to provoke the departure of entire layers of their membership. It was thus that the Communist parties were most often formed, and although there is no immutable rule about the matter, one can suppose that the situation will be about the same for the parties of the IV International."⁵⁶

*Problems of the New York
Headquarters of the International*

The role and activity of the International Secretariat in New York declined during the

last years of the war. This was due not only to the fact that Jean van Heijenoort and Bert Cochran were the only people left to man the IS office, but also to the development of a factional dispute within the Socialist Workers Party and increasing difficulties which van Heijenoort in particular had with the leadership of the SWP.

In a confidential memorandum which he presented shortly after the end of the war, van Heijenoort says that "the political sterility of the IS is an established fact of long duration. I reserve for another occasion this history and the responsibility of the leadership of the SWP, but the fact itself is sufficiently evident." He claimed that the SWP leaders had not permitted "the giving of political content to the work of the IS," frequently claiming that not enough information was available for the International Secretariat to take a position.

Another factor, undoubtedly, was that van Heijenoort sympathized with the minority within the Socialist Workers Party led by Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow which sought a rapprochement with the Shachtmanite Workers Party, which had been expelled in 1940. His position intensified his difficulties in getting along with the SWP leadership.⁵⁷

Van Heijenoort retired from activity in the Trotskyist movement soon after the end of the war. In the next decade his assistant, Bert Cochran, was to lead a major split in the SWP.

The Provisional European Secretariat

Towards a European Conference of the Fourth International

The events of April-June 1940, with the German conquest first of Norway and Denmark, and then of the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, dealt shattering blows to the Trotskyist movements in Western Europe. All driven underground, they faced immense difficulty not only in maintaining

their individual national organizations intact but even more in reestablishing and maintaining relations among those organizations, and of all of them with the Fourth International outside Europe. The situation was further complicated by the schisms which had occurred in several European Trotskyist groups just prior to the war.

The Molinier faction of the French Trotskyists, the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, in preparation for the war had sent three people to Belgium as early as February 1939: Pierre Frank, Raymond Molinier and Rodolphe Prager. These three established contacts with Belgian and Dutch Trotskyists, including elements which were not officially in the Fourth International, the Vereeken party in Belgium and the Sneevliet RASAP in the Netherlands.

When the war broke out, a proclamation was issued against the conflict, in the name of the Fourth International, although none of the groups signing it was officially a member of the International. The document was signed by Vereeken of the Contre Le Courant group in Belgium, Prager for the PCI, and a representative of a British dissident group.⁵⁸

The Trotskyists of Western Europe suffered considerable persecution from their respective governments once the war had begun. Their situation became much worse once the Nazis had overrun Western Europe. Although there were some individual contacts between the French Trotskyists and those of the Low Countries it was not until January 1942 that a delegation of French Trotskyites, representing the group by then recognized as the French Section of the Fourth International, went to Brussels to meet with their Belgian counterparts. Rodolphe Prager has said that the French delegation consisted of Marcel Hic, Ivan Craipeau, and Swann.

As a consequence of the meeting in Brussels, a session was held soon afterward at a farm at St. Hubert in the Belgian Ardennes belonging to Henry Opta, a young Belgian

Trotskyist. It established the first European Secretariat of the Fourth International. Prager reported that Opta and Abraham Leon-Wajnszok represented the Belgian Trotskyists at this meeting but doesn't indicate who else was there, although suggesting that no more than five or six people were at the meeting.⁵⁹

The headquarters of the new European Secretariat was established in Paris. It sought to coordinate the activities of the various Trotskyist groups in countries under Nazi occupation. It also issued at least two important documents, a "Thesis on the National Question," and a "Manifesto on the Dissolution of the Communist International," which we shall note later.

During the summer of 1943 the first European Secretariat was succeeded by what was called the Provisional European Secretariat of the International. It published a resolution on "The Reconstruction and Reinforcement of the IV International" on July 19, 1943.⁶⁰

The Provisional Secretariat also undertook to publish a regular periodical to speak for the European Trotskyists. The first issue of *Quatrième Internationale* appeared in August 1943. It and the December 1943 edition were mimeographed, but with the January 1944 number the magazine was printed. Five issues were published in 1944.

The alteration of the name was not the only change in the Fourth International's European organization in 1943. Its personnel also was altered. The first European Secretariat was largely managed by Marcel Hic, a member of the French section, who was principally responsible for the documents issued by the organization. Subsequently, he was accused of using "ultra-bureaucratic methods."⁶¹

The new Provisional European Secretariat was largely under the influence of Michel Raptis, better known as Michel Pablo. He was a young Greek Trotskyist who had belonged to the "unofficial" group of Poulipolis. He had lived in France since 1938, and between 1940 and 1942 had been sick in the

Saint Hilaire du Touvet sanatorium, although he had maintained contact with his Trotskyist colleagues.

The other members of the Provisional Secretariat were Marcel Hic (who, when he was arrested in October 1943, was succeeded by Ivan Craipeau), Nicolas Spoulber, also a member of the French POI; Leon-Wajnszok of the Belgian party, Rafael Font-Farran of the Spanish Bolshevik-Leninist Group, and after a while Rodolphe Prager of the French group of Molinier.⁶²

The Provisional European Secretariat sought to bring together all of the European groups professing loyalty to the principles of the Fourth International whether or not they had been officially recognized as sections of the International. Overtures were made particularly to the Molinier group in France and the Vereeken party in Belgium. The former accepted these overtures and joined the Secretariat, as a result of which Prager became a member of that body. However, all efforts to incorporate the Vereeken group, undertaken particularly by Prager, proved to no avail.⁶³

Particular attention was paid by the Provisional European Secretariat to trying to reconstruct a German affiliate. We have indicated the success of this effort in our discussion of the French and German affiliates of International Trotskyism.

The Provisional European Secretariat also worked to reunite the French Trotskyists. A joint committee of the Secretariat and the two principal French groups, the POI and the Molinierists, was established. At that point Prager joined the Secretariat representing the Molinier faction. Subsequently, negotiations were expanded to include the "October" group and the small element led by Barta. The former joined in the final unification of French Trotskyism, although the Barta group did not.⁶⁴

Documents of the European Secretariat

The most controversial document issued by the European Trotskyists in the name of the

Fourth International was the "Thesis on the National Question" issued by the European Secretariat in July 1942. It was in fact written by Marcel Hic, then the leading figure in the French Trotskyist underground. It was subsequently repudiated by the European Trotskyists. The European Conference of early 1944 condemned it as a "social-patriotic deviation incompatible with the program of the IV International," a strong statement, although Rodolphe Prager thought that the conference was condemning an earlier statement by the French Trotskyists in its resolution as well as the proclamation issued in the name of the European Secretariat.⁶⁵

The Thesis started by tracing the growth of nationalism as part of the evolution of capitalism. However, it added that in the present epoch nationalism was neither progressive nor reactionary per se; what it was depended on its social content.⁶⁶ It also stressed the need to support the anti-imperialist struggle of the colonial and semicolonial countries subject to the European empires, as well as that of the oppressed nationalities of Europe itself such as the Ukrainians in Poland, Croats in Yugoslavia, etc.⁶⁷

The document also stressed the need for the "revolutionary party" to put forward class struggle ideas within any nationalist movement. It likewise strongly attacked the "nationalism of Radio London,"⁶⁸ and strongly denounced the chauvinism of the Communist parties' appeal to the nationalist feelings of the people of the Nazi-occupied countries.⁶⁹

In these parts of the Thesis there was relatively little which could be interpreted as being in conflict with the orthodox Trotskyist position. However, there were other portions about which this was not true. The Thesis proclaimed that "the Marxist revolutionaries cannot therefore neglect the justified national arguments of the masses. . . ."⁷⁰ Elsewhere, it argued that "the national movement has, in Europe, a fundamentally different character from the reac-

tionary and imperialist nationalism of London; it is one of the fundamental forces which prepares and matures the revolutionary crisis in Europe. . . . The national movement of the masses, far from having strictly nationalist roots, plunged into one of the most fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system in the imperialist epoch: it is first of all the manifestation, *under the form of nationalism*, of the radicalization of the petit bourgeoisie, a new expression of the revolt of the middle classes against large financial capital."⁷¹

This argument was expanded by the Thesis when it said that "in a general way, in spite of the reactionary character of its demands, the national movement can play a progressive role in the revolutionary crisis which is about to begin, in that it will launch great masses of the population in the political arena, aligning them practically against the domination of imperialism. The characteristic of the great historic crisis is exactly to launch into struggle against the existing order those who before participated in the exploitation of the masses but who, newly joining the struggle against the regime, provide the members of the first wave of revolution."⁷²

The Thesis reemphasized the leadership which the petty bourgeoisie would first give to the inevitable revolutionary wave. It argued that "disorganized and disoriented, strongly hit by misery and unemployment, the proletariat can only regroup within the national movement of the petit bourgeoisie. The legal and illegal attempts at regroupment are at first effected in function of national issues. But, very quickly, the labor movement has assumed, throughout Europe, its own features; although nationalism and antifascism remain one of the fundamental characteristics, it is very quickly oriented towards autonomous class action, undertaken with methods appropriate to the working class."⁷³

The outright endorsement of the idea of Trotskyist participation in the nationalist reaction against Nazi domination was too

much in conflict with the traditional internationalism of the Trotskyist movement. All of its reservations, warning of danger, and denunciations of chauvinism were not enough to save it from the taint of heresy.

The manifesto of the European Secretariat on the occasion of Stalin's dissolution of the Communist International, which according to Rodolphe Prager was also written by Marcel Hic,⁷⁴ and was published as a pamphlet, was extensive but quite orthodox in Trotskyist terms. It largely conformed with the resolution adopted independently at about the same time by the New York headquarters of the Fourth International.

The European Secretariat argued that the decision of Stalin is not only the crowning of twenty years of abandonment of principles and capitulation to imperialism. It poses the problem of the whole future of the revolution. At the moment when the capitalist world is cracking everywhere . . . "the gesture of Stalin constitutes a veritable betrayal. . . ."⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the European Secretariat argued, "Stalin, no more than Churchill or Roosevelt, no more than Hitler or Franco, can stop the class struggle. He has killed the III International with his hands. Already, the IV International rises to replace it. The IV International is not just a hope, it is not only something which tomorrow might take form. It already exists, suffers and struggles in thirty countries. The masses will join forces tomorrow under its banner and tomorrow it will triumph!"

The most striking feature of the manifesto was its discussion of the Soviet Union. It argued:

The dissolution of the Communist International constitutes in this way a particularly decisive step in breaking the last formal tie uniting the USSR and the world proletarian revolution, making national socialism the official doctrine of the Soviet state. . . . But the Soviet masses have not consented to such enormous sacri-

fices in order for the Workers State to be replaced by imperialist exploitation of a colonial type. To the program of bourgeois counter-revolution of imperialism, the masses oppose the program of political revolution; they want to chase the bureaucracy from power, take in hand the administration of the economy through workers and peasants committees. This program, which is that of the return to the tradition of October, is that of Trotskyism, that of the IV International.⁷⁶

Subsequently, the Provisional European Secretariat issued manifestos greeting the uprising of the Italian workers at the time of the fall of the Mussolini government, calling for solidarity with the German workers, deploring anti-German chauvinism and the bombing of open cities in Germany by the Allies. The Provisional Secretariat also issued a proclamation about the partisan movement in December 1943.⁷⁷

The European Conference of the Fourth International

The intention of the Provisional Secretariat to organize a European conference of the FI was announced in the first issue of *Quatrième Internationale*, dated August 1943, in a document entitled "Resolution: Reconstruction and Reinforcement of the IV International." The resolution announced that "this conference will bring together all the revolutionary tendencies, fractions or parties which accept or which are evolving towards the principles of the III International of Lenin and Trotsky, as well as the fundamental ideas enunciated by the primitive nucleus of the IV International in its transition program and which recognize the need for new parties and the new international."⁷⁸

The document noted that the conference "will choose, in proportion to the force of the ideological tendencies, compatible with the general principles of the IV Interna-

tional, an enlarged executive committee and a limited . . . secretariat expressing the political line of the majority of the conference."⁷⁹

In preparation for this conference the Provisional Secretariat drew up basic documents for discussion which were submitted to the various national groups which were to participate in the meeting. These were thoroughly discussed by conferences of the respective groups.

The European conference finally met for six days early in February 1944 in an isolated farm house at St.-Germain-la-Patrice near Beauvais, belonging to French Trotskyists Daniel Mat and Louis Dalmas. During the six days and six nights the delegates were together they only suspended their activities for short periods, when they all slept on the floor of the farmhouse. They did not leave the building during the whole time.

Fourteen delegates attended the European conference. They were Abraham Leon-Wajnsztoek and Ernest Mandel of the PCR of Belgium; Ivan Craipeau, Nicolas Spoulber, Marcel Gibelin, and Alain Le Dem of the French POR; Jacques Grinblat and Rodolphe Prager of the French CCR; Henri Claude-Pouge of the French October Group; Martin Monat of the German Trotskyists; Michel Raptis and Georges Vitsoris of the Greek Section; and Ernesto Morris and Rafael Font-Farran of the Spanish Trotskyists.⁸⁰

Much of the discussion was taken up with the problem of reunifying the French Trotskyists, a task which was finally largely achieved. The session also adopted a number of basic documents which were approved by a majority of the delegates, but with the representatives of the CCR and the Spaniards generally voting in the negative and the delegate of the October Group abstaining.⁸¹

There were five major programmatic documents adopted by the conference. These were a "Thesis on the Liquidation of the Second Imperialist War and the Mounting Revolution," "Thesis on the Situation in the Labor Movement and the Perspectives

of Development of the IV International," "Resolution on the Strategy of the European Sections of the IV International in the Workers Struggles," "Resolution on the Policy of the Workers Front," and "Resolution on the Mounting Revolution and the 'Second' Front."

The documents of this conference concentrated on the need for converting the imperialist war into a civil war. They predicted that such a civil war, between the proletariat and its peasant and petty bourgeois allies on the one hand, and the capitalist class of all the countries involved on the other, was about to begin.

The resolutions saw the uprising of the workers of Italy, particularly in the north in the period between the fall of Mussolini and the armistice with the Allies, as the beginning of the Europe-wide civil war. That precedent would be followed by the workers throughout Europe, particularly Western and Central Europe.

The resolutions put particular emphasis on the importance of the revolution in Germany as the key to the revolution in Europe. They professed to see growing resistance of the German workers to the Nazi regime, and willingness of the workers to enter into revolutionary struggle in Germany. For that reason these resolutions denounced "chauvinistic" attacks on the Germans by the resistance movements in the occupied countries, and particularly the Stalinists' use of chauvinism. They attacked the idea of "national resistance," counterposing the notion of working-class resistance across national lines. They called for fraternization of German workers and the forced laborers from the occupied countries; they also strongly advocated fraternization of workers of the occupied countries with German rank and file troops.

The resolutions noted that the Trotskyists had opposed the use of terrorism and sabotage by the resistance movements before 1942. However, with the levies of workers from occupied countries to work in Ger-

many starting in 1942 the situation had changed, with many thousands of workers, particularly young workers, joining the resistance, the maquis, as a result of the German campaigns to round up forced workers. As a consequence, the resolutions said, the Trotskyists now supported the maquis because they were a genuine movement of the masses. However, within the resistance movement they urged their followers to seek the separation of workers, and that this separate workers organization should be committed to class warfare, not only against the German occupiers but also against the indigenous capitalists and in time against the occupying allied troops. The resolutions urged that the Trotskyists should organize their own groups within the resistance and should insist that the workers never participate in nationalist resistance groups.

The resolutions urged formation in factories of workers fronts, of workers of all political and trade union affiliations. These fronts should prepare to take over the factories when the chance should present itself. Meanwhile, the workers fronts should fight for the "transitional demands" of shorter hours, better pay, better distribution of food, and so on. They should also organize a workers militia in the factories and shops to be ready for the cataclysm when it arrived. They should establish liaison with the resistance outside the cities and get training from it for the workers militia. The workers' fronts should establish contacts, too, with the peasant workers in the countryside, both for food distribution and for cooperation in the ultimate denouement of the revolution.

The resolutions insisted that the Soviet Union was still a workers state because it maintained nationalized property and central planning, and that defense of the USSR was part of making the world revolution. They said that there might have to be temporary cooperation with the "bureaucracy" still controlling the USSR but that that should not mean giving up the idea of a political revolution in the Soviet Union,

since only a USSR controlled by the workers and not the bureaucracy could efficaciously defend itself. The workers uprising against capitalism in Western and Central Europe and the Soviet workers' political revolution against the Soviet bureaucracy were part and parcel of the same struggle.

While urging support of the USSR the resolutions opposed sabotage and similar activities designed to prevent materials getting to the German armies in the East if such actions would imperil the revolutionary struggle in Western and Central Europe. The revolution of the workers of Central and Western Europe, the resolutions insisted, was the greatest possible aid which could be given to the Soviet Union. However, sabotage on a mass scale was permissible.

The resolutions recognized the current weakness of the Trotskyist groups. However, they pictured the Fourth International as existing throughout the world, and carrying on a united struggle for the revolution. They insisted on the need for the revolution to be led by a Bolshevik-Leninist party but insisted that that party already existed, and that it would inevitably grow and take control of the movement as civil war developed in Europe.

The resolutions insisted that the world revolution was spreading throughout the globe but that it might develop at a different pace in different areas. They maintained that the key to the world revolution was the revolution in Europe, which was just over the horizon.

The conference insisted that the workers had learned from past experiences. It claimed that the workers, and particularly the German workers would not be misled into support of "bourgeois democracy" again as they had been after World War I. However, the resolutions advocated the tactic of pushing "democratic" demands where appropriate. Under certain circumstances, where the workers were not yet in a position to seize power themselves, it might be reasonable to call for a constituent assembly,

and it certainly was correct to advocate the fullest democratic freedoms of press, speech, party organization, trade union independence, and the right to strike. However, under other circumstances, where the workers were in a position to seize power, it would be a crime to advocate a constituent assembly and to put major emphasis on other democratic demands.

The conference documents clearly drew a parallel between the immediate future and what had happened between 1917 and 1919. With this in mind, the resolutions urged formation of councils of workers in the factories, councils of peasants, and councils of soldiers in the armed forces. The revolution would come when these councils—soviets—seized power and reorganized the political life and economy of the various countries of Western and Central Europe.

The resolutions warned against attempts by "reformists" to convert the soviets into mere trade unions. They warned against "apoliticism" in workers organizations in the factories. They advocated that the basic units of the factory committees should be small groups of three or four workers with liaison among these groups and liaison among various factories, with the establishment ultimately of regional and national groups, in preparation for the ultimate seizure of power. They emphasized the need for democracy within the various workers organizations.

While recognizing that middle-class elements had been moved to revolt against their oppressors, the resolutions warned that there remained vestiges of reactionary ideas in the middle class, such as chauvinism and a desire to return to the past. The workers groups should cooperate with middle-class rebels but push them toward the only worthwhile objective: the socialist revolution.

The conference documents laid great stress on the idea that the Allies, in their fight against the Germans, were very conscious of the possibility of a workers revolu-

tion emerging from the collapse of the German forces, and that the policies of the Allies were particularly designed to prevent that from happening. This was the explanation for the Allies' insistence on complete German surrender and their equating the German workers with the Nazis. It was also the explanation for their making deals with Darlan and Badoglio. The resolutions insisted, too, that Stalin was fully cooperating with the efforts to prevent the European revolution, because he well understood that triumph of revolution in Western and Central Europe would be the death knell of the rule of the bureaucracy in the USSR and would be followed by political revolution in the USSR. The resolutions emphasized the class struggle going on in the Allied countries, and that the English and American workers would support the revolution in Europe and were backing the war because they were anxious to defend the Soviet Union. The conference urged fraternization with Allied troops when they landed.

The Allied leaders, the resolutions insisted, wanted to extend the war as long as possible, to undermine revolutionary possibilities and weaken the USSR. But the advances of the Red Army had made them change their plans and had made the Second Front the order of the day.⁸¹

In addition to the programmatic documents which it adopted, the European conference also passed some organizational resolutions. One was a document calling for all European Fourth International affiliates to have "Internationalist Communist" in their names, followed by "{—Section of the IV International}."⁸² Another document was "Complements to the Statutes of the IV International," which was designed both to assure that each party would have a democratic centralist form of organization, and have a structure which would guard it, as an illegal organization (under the circumstances), as much as possible from penetration and disruption by the governmental and occupation authorities.⁸⁴

Thus during the last fifteen months of the war the Trotskyist movement in Europe functioned under the general guidance of an Executive Committee and Secretariat emanating from a duly elected conference. These central authorities undoubtedly were of great utility not only in maintaining contacts among the existing national Trotskyist organizations, but also in helping reestablish liaison with the Fourth International outside of Europe, as the fortunes of war made that possible, and in helping to begin the task of organization or reorganization in countries where the Trotskyist movement did not exist, as those countries were freed from Nazi control.

The Fourth International: The Immediate Post- World War II Period

Between the end of the Second World War and 1953 there existed only one Fourth International. Thereafter, International Trotskyism was to be always divided into two or more organizations which claimed to represent the ideas of Leon Trotsky and to be the legitimate successor of the International which had been established with his patronage and enthusiastic support in 1938.

There were three international meetings of the Fourth International during the 1945-53 period, in 1946, 1948, and 1951. In each of these, there were evidences of disagreements over not only strategy and tactics to be followed by the movement but also over some basic programmatic and ideological issues. But a split in the International only developed after the last of these meetings.

The 1946 Conference

Negotiations for the 1946 Preconference

At the end of the Second World War there were two international bodies representing the Trotskyist movement. One of these was the International Secretariat, which had been functioning, more or less, in New York City since the outbreak of the war. The other was the European Secretariat, which had been set up in Paris in 1943 and ratified by the European conference early in 1944. There was some delicacy required to bring these two groups together and to organize a conference from which would emerge a united leadership for the Fourth International.

The first person associated with the New

York Secretariat to enter into contact with the European Secretariat was Terence Phelan, who was present in Paris as a war correspondent after the liberation of the French capital from Nazi occupation. He arrived in September 1944 and was surprised and pleased to learn about the establishment of the European organization, and that it had adopted positions in conformity with those of the SWP. He delivered greetings of the European Executive Committee to the Eleventh Conference of the SWP in November 1944.¹

Another American who had contacts with the European Executive and Secretariat during this period was George Breitman, a member of the National Committee of the SWP who at that time was a United States soldier stationed in Paris. He participated in the activities of the European Secretariat and represented the SWP at the conference of the Paris district of the French Trotskyist party, the PCI, in March 1945 and at the conference of the Belgian section in November 1945.² When the war was over Breitman had enough "points" under the U.S. military discharge system to leave the armed forces, but at his own request was allowed to stay on in Europe for several months.³

Late in 1945 Phelan and Breitman were joined by another SWP leader, Sam Gordon, who was specially deputed to maintain contacts with the European Executive Committee and Secretariat.⁴

Meanwhile, the International Secretariat, based in New York, was undergoing a crisis. Jean van Heijenoort, the principal secretary there, was having increasing difficulties with the leadership of the SWP. On October 20, 1945 he sent a confidential letter to the European Executive Committee and Secretariat urging them to take charge of the affairs of the International, as "certainly by far the most representative organ of the Fourth International today." The European groups turned down this suggestion and urged van Heijenoort to continue his work in the International Secretariat.⁵

By this time, negotiations were under way

for calling an international meeting. The European Secretariat had called for such a conference, with the concurrent transfer of the International Secretariat back to Europe. Also, the European Executive Committee decided to call its own conference in December 1945, but that meeting was postponed when the Socialist Workers Party of the United States suggested the calling of a "pre-conference" of the whole International.⁶

The 1946 Conference of the Fourth International

The first postwar international meeting of the Trotskyists took place March 3-5, 1946. It was held in a large Paris restaurant and the first two days passed without incident. However, at eleven A.M. on the third day, apparently on the initiative of the restaurant owner who was suspicious of what was transpiring in his establishment, the police raided the meeting and arrested all the delegates.

The Americans, who included one soldier in uniform (George Breitman), were quickly released, but most of the others were held overnight. They continued with the agenda of the conference while being held in the Tenth Arrondissement jail. Two Spanish and two Vietnamese delegates were kept in prison for two days.⁷

The minutes of the meeting were preserved due to the quick thinking of Terence Phelan, who was keeping them. When the police arrived he put the notes in his briefcase and then, on the grounds that he was a foreign correspondent, refused to allow the police to look into it, and they acquiesced.⁸

According to Rodolphe Prager there were between twenty-eight and thirty-two delegates attending this conference.⁹ Among those present were Eduardo Mauricio and Rafael Font-Farran of Spain, Pierre and Le Van from Vietnam, Piet van't Hart and Sol Santen of the Netherlands, Heinrich Buchbinder of Switzerland, Michel Raptis (Pablo) of Greece, Jacques Grinblat, Marcel Gibelin and Paul Parisot of France; Gerry Healy,

John Archer, and Dan Tattenbaum of Great Britain; Bob Armstrong of Ireland; and Sam Gordon, Sherry Mangan (Phelan), and George Breitman of the United States. Breitman was still a member of the U.S. armed forces.¹⁰

Although this meeting was officially called a "preconference," one of the first resolutions which it adopted unanimously was "to meet as a World Conference of the IV International and take responsibly decisions on all the questions on the agenda, and to dissolve the present International Executive Committee and the International Secretariat and elect at this conference a new ICE and IS with full authority to act until the forthcoming world congress."¹¹

The 1946 Conference of the Fourth International adopted two major programmatic resolutions. One was addressed to "the Workers, to the Exploited, to the Oppressed Colonial People of the Entire World," and had the title "Only Victorious Socialist Revolutions Can Stop the Third World War!" The other was a resolution entitled "The New Imperialist 'Peace' and the Construction of the Parties of the Fourth International." There was considerable repetition in these documents, and so we shall discuss together the major points made in both of them.¹²

The two principal statements of the 1946 conference reflected the differences which existed within the Fourth International in the interpretation of the postwar reality. In general they took the position which had been adopted by the majority of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, but there were delegates present who objected to this analysis. The majority of the British delegation was particularly opposed, and subsequent to the conference the British RCP adopted resolutions objecting to the documents.

Both resolutions passed by the conference stressed the vast increase in the power of the United States which had resulted from World War II. They went on to assert the "inevitability" of a new Depression infi-

nately more severe than that of the 1930s. They insisted that in order to "stabilize" the capitalist economy the capitalists of the United States and its allies would inexorably drive down the living standards and working conditions of the workers. The resolutions insisted that the Second World War had not resolved the contradictions of the capitalist system, and that sooner, rather than later, the United States would seek a way out of these contradictions by taking the lead in launching a new world conflict, this time against the Soviet Union.

One has to suppose that the majority representatives of the British RCP argued against this resolution in the conference. They voted against it, and a few months later the RCP's own national conference passed resolutions objecting to the economic crisis notions accepted by the International, as well as to the International's insistence that the United States would shortly provoke a new world war.¹³

The 1946 resolutions reflected the by then traditional attitudes of Trotskyism towards the Soviet Union. The USSR was proclaimed still to be a workers state because of its socialized property and planning system, although at the same time it was said to have degenerated under the control of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Stalin and his associates were accused of having joined with the Social Democrats to thwart and betray the revolution which otherwise would have occurred, particularly in Europe, at the end of the Second World War. Special note was taken of the failure of a revolution to develop in Germany with the collapse of the Nazi regime, as the Trotskyists had predicted that it would. This failure was attributed to the "chauvinism" of both the Stalinists and the Western Allies, to the continued military occupation of Germany, and to the exceedingly severe socio-economic conditions in Germany. The revolutionary spirit would only revive in Germany when the minimum conditions of living had been restored there.

The resolutions noted that the Stalinist

regime was in the process of establishing a sphere of influence for itself in Eastern Europe. They expressed approval of the "progressive" measures adopted by the East European regimes, such as agrarian reform, confiscation of foreign investments, nationalization of enterprises, but denounced the "pillaging" of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union, emphasizing that this was turning against the USSR its natural allies in those countries, the workers, and the peasants.

There was renewed emphasis in these resolutions on the need for the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Although proclaiming the need to defend the USSR against imperialism, the "Manifesto to the Workers" asserted that "The IV International does not support any of the existing regimes."¹⁴ Both documents denounced the failure of the Stalin government to seek support for the Soviet Union among its most natural allies, the workers of the capitalist countries.

A strongly recurring theme in both of the major documents of the 1946 Conference was the existence of great revolutionary potential at that moment. The defeats of the revolution suffered in 1944-45 were just temporary. The inevitable economic depression and intensified exploitation of the workers in the major capitalist industrial nations, and the growing revolt in the colonial and semicolonial countries both presaged a new revolutionary wave very soon. Evidence for this was seen in the rash of strikes which was sweeping the United States at the time, which were interpreted as having incipiently revolutionary motivations. Furthermore, it was argued, the petty bourgeoisie throughout the capitalist world were evidencing growing disillusionment with the capitalist system and were turning toward the workers' parties, another portent of revolutionary possibilities.

Both documents stressed that the Fourth International would play the crucial role in leading this revolutionary upsurge. Although its parties were small, the exceedingly favorable conditions for their growth

indicated the virtual certainty of their rapid expansion in the immediate future. It was stressed that only the Fourth International had the correct revolutionary program.

In this connection the documents stressed that unlike the prewar period, the Fourth International now had no rivals. Somewhat prematurely, the Socialist and Communist Internationals were declared dead, and rather more accurately the London Bureau was said to have disappeared. In spite of the gains of the socialist and communist parties at the end of the war it was proclaimed that the period of the decline of these groups, particularly the communist parties, had begun.

Therefore, the road was cleared for the leadership of the Fourth International. The fate of humanity was declared to depend upon this leadership, and it was argued that only "defeatism" within the ranks of the Fourth International could thwart its inevitable progress and triumph. Indeed, an additional separate resolution on the favorable conditions then existing for the building of the International was passed to supplement the two fundamental documents of the conference.¹⁵

Considerable attention was paid to the strategy and tactics to be adopted by the Fourth International and its sections in the period just ahead. Although both independent parties and fractions within the socialist and communist parties were to be used, it was declared that "contrary to the conditions which characterized the prewar situation, independent work of our European sections, their autonomous existence, distinct from the traditional organizations, acquires in general greater importance than fraction work, and can serve as a powerful pole of attraction for working class vanguard elements which wish to struggle and who separate, indignant or disappointed, from those organizations."¹⁶

The 1946 Conference stressed the importance of transitional demands in the existing prerevolutionary circumstances. Among the slogans suggested were those for socialist/

communist governments without "bourgeois" participation, for a constitutional assembly, for wages tied to price changes, for "the right to work" and division of existing employment among all workers without wage reductions, for nationalization without compensation of various enterprises. It was emphasized that these transitional demands should always be put forward in terms of being steps on the road to socialism.

Special attention was given to the transitional demands to be stressed in Soviet-occupied areas. There emphasis should be on agrarian reform, nationalizations, and freedom of the workers parties, unions and other organizations. Support for the continuance of Soviet military occupation of those countries should only be offered on the basis of their carrying out such demands.

In general, it was argued that the sections of the Fourth International must struggle to achieve or maintain the legality of their organizations, should emphasize the importance of their press for getting their message over to the workers and should be active and militant in the trade union movement. Some specific tasks were set forth for the sections in the United States, Great Britain, and the colonial countries.

In addition to the discussion and adoption of these programmatic resolutions and hearing reports on the functioning of the International and European Executives and Secretariats, the 1946 Conference took upon itself the task of choosing a new leadership for the Fourth International. It was unanimously decided that on the new International Executive Committee there should be two from Great Britain, two from France, one from Germany, one Italian, one Belgian, one Spaniard, one Vietnamese, one from North America, and four from "Canada" (a euphemism for the United States, where the swp claimed that the Voorhees Law forbade it to have official affiliation with the International), plus the Secretary, Michel Raptis (Pablo). In addition, there were to be "consultative" members with a voice but not

a vote from the Netherlands, Switzerland, India, and China.

In practice, the positions for Germany, China, and Latin America remained vacant, and as a consequence representatives from the Netherlands and Switzerland were given full membership in the IEC. By 1947 the International Secretariat was composed of Michel Raptis as the principal secretary, Sam Gordon, Morris Lewitt (Stein), and Sherry Mangan (Phelan) from the United States; Pierre Frank and Ivan Craipeau of France; Ernest Mandel of Belgium, V. Sastry of India; and Jimmy Deane (unidentified). Other members of the IEC in addition to these were Jock Haston of Great Britain, Eduardo Mauricio of Spain, Le Van of Vietnam, Sol Santen of the Netherlands, Heinrich Buchbinder of Switzerland, and Jacques Grinblat and Paul Parisot of France.¹⁷

Between the 1946 and 1948 Meetings

The International Executive Committee elected at the 1946 Conference had five plenary sessions between then and the Second World Congress of the Fourth International in 1948. The report submitted by the International Secretariat to the 1948 meeting noted that these dealt with "numerous problems which the International had to face." It also undertook the preparations for the Second Congress, with "the longest discussion possible . . . safeguarding the rights of the minority. . . ."

At the same time the International Secretariat, which was made up "in its majority of representatives of the important sections" was especially active under the general direction of the IEC. It issued statements on issues which arose, and established contacts "with practically all the sections and all the organizations claiming to be associated with the Fourth International." It also published the periodical, *Quatrième Internationale*, as well as an Internal Bulletin, and also issued a Press Service "which furnished to the press of the International information on

the life of the sections." Finally, it handled with unaccustomed rapidity the various theses and other documents in preparation for the 1948 congress, distributing them for discussion among the sections.¹⁸

The International Secretariat and IEC spent much of their time and discussion during those two years on internal problems of the various sections. The IS report to the 1948 Conference noted that they sought "the unification of the groups in a single section where that was possible, the best tactics to be followed by the sections in the struggle to break their isolation and to find the path to the masses." The same report noted that the International had had to deal particularly with the situation in the British, French, Swiss, and Spanish sections.

In their preparations for the Second Congress of the International, the IS report claimed that the IEC and IS "sought to have all sections and all tendencies participate in the preparatory discussion. The long years had made a normal life of the International impossible, and the international leadership did not hesitate to take measures to assure participation of groups and tendencies which had broken in the past with the International Workers Party."¹⁹ As we shall see, a number of the groups represented at the Congress denied that there had been any such broad discussion prior to the meeting.

Pierre Frank has summed up the path taken by the International between the 1946 Conference and the Second World Congress in 1948: "The new orientation, resulting from the new world situation, consisted in the task of changing our sections, which until then had been propaganda groups, into parties linked to the mass struggle—and aimed to leading those struggles."²⁰

The Second World Congress

Circumstances of the Congress

Although the 1946 international meeting had taken upon itself the powers of a World

Conference of the Fourth International, it was not subsequently considered to have been a congress of the organization. It was not until late March and early April 1948 that the official Second World Congress of the Fourth International met in Paris.²¹

According to the official report of the Second Congress which appeared in *Quatrième Internationale* in its March–May 1948 issue, "delegates of twenty-two organizations of the IV International, coming from all continents met to discuss the problems of the revolutionary labor movement and to elaborate in common the line of the IV International in the immediate future."²² Max Shachtman, who was present, later confirmed that "the congress was undoubtedly the most numerously attended and representative of all the international meetings of the Trotskyist movement." Shachtman added that "bourgeois or Stalinist repression and meagerness of financial resources prevented many sections from sending their representatives. Yet as never before, delegates came to the meeting not only from Europe, but from Asia, South Africa and several countries of the Western Hemisphere. Their presence was an earnest of the devotion of the Trotskyist movement to that socialist internationalism which has been abandoned by so many backsliders, cynics and tired men."²³ Security precautions were very extensive at the meeting, presumably to prevent it being disrupted by the police or anyone else. One had great difficulty to get into or out of the meeting, and credentials were exceedingly closely checked. These efforts did not prevent interested governments from finding out what was going on. Max Shachtman, for example, was shown by a United States Embassy official a virtually verbatim account of all that had transpired. The leader of the British delegation was hailed as he was returning from Paris by an immigration official who knew him personally and was asked how he had voted on various questions discussed at the meeting.²⁴

The agenda of the Second World Congress was extensive. After a report by the International Secretary, Michel Raptis, on the evolution of the International since its founding conference almost ten years before, there were extensive debates over a general political resolution, on a resolution concerning the situation in the colonial countries and on a thesis on the Communist-controlled states. There were also extensive discussions, with appropriate resolutions, concerning the situation within a number of the national sections of the FI. New statutes of the International were also adopted.

Although the resolutions adopted at the congress subsequently appeared in *Quatrième Internationale*, no record of the debates at the meeting seems to have been published. In the discussion which follows we shall reply both on the *Quatrième Internationale* report and on an article published later in the year by Max Shachtman, one of the principal opposition spokesmen at the meeting.

Pablo's Report to the Congress

The report of the International Secretariat, submitted by Michel Pablo, was entitled "1938-1948: Ten Years of Combat." It started with a discussion of "How the International Resisted the Test of the War," noting the persecutions to which the various national sections had been subjected during the conflict, and the International's many martyrs, then quickly reviewed the work of the New York-based International Secretariat. Pablo concluded that "the balance of the IV International during the war has no comparison in the annals of the revolutionary movement."

Other portions of the report dealt with differences which had arisen within the International during the war, particularly the Shachtmanite split and controversies over "the national question," especially in France. Pablo then reviewed the International's support of defense of the Soviet

Union during the war, saying that "the International was absolutely right in insisting on unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack," but arguing also that "the error was in the fact of not having clearly warned the masses . . . that the Red Army, as instrument of the Stalinist bureaucracy, would do all in its power to repress their revolutionary movements. . . ."

Pablo also offered "self-criticism" on the International's position on the role of Germany in the postwar revolution. He said that the International had not paid enough attention to "(a) the material and human destruction in Germany, (b) the reactionary character of the Soviet and Allied occupation, (c) the extreme atomization of the German proletariat under the fascist regime. All of these factors worked to thwart the premises of major action by the German masses."

Finally, Pablo's report noted the consolidation of a new leadership in the International after the war, and divergences which appeared in various sections, particularly those of Britain, France, and Spain. He concluded with the claim that "the World Congress of 1948 will declare that the IV International is on the way to carrying out its tasks, and by its decisions it will consolidate the orientation of the whole International on that way."²⁵

In his report on the congress Shachtman noted that there was no debate on Pablo's report. He claimed that "as far as can be remembered, this is the first instance in the history of the movement where a congress failed to devote a single word to a discussion of the report of its Executive Committee, and a report of ten years at that!"²⁶

The General Political Resolution

The General Political Resolution of the Second World Congress was entitled "The World Situation and the Tasks of the IV International." It was introduced by Michel Pablo.²⁷

The document started with the statement that the positions which the International had taken at its 1946 Conference had all been borne out by events. It still predicted, as the International had two years earlier, that there would soon be a massive economic depression. However, it hedged its prediction in view of the advent of the Marshall Plan. On balance, it concluded that the world capitalist system now had achieved an "unstable equilibrium."

Turning its attention to the Cold War, the resolution pictured this as being due to the aggressiveness of the United States against the Soviet Union. The USSR, on the other hand, had only been acting defensively, to consolidate its hold on Eastern Europe.

As in 1946, the General Political Resolution of 1948 stressed the continuing militancy of the workers in Europe and the United States, among other things seeing the rise of the Progressive Party movement of Henry Wallace in the United States as evidence of this. The document also stressed working-class resistance to the Nehru government in India and to Chiang Kai-shek's regime in China. It likewise stressed the growth of labor militancy in Latin America since the end of World War II, which it pictured as continuing in spite of the supposed right-wing turn of the bourgeoisie and governments of the area.

The document then analyzed the rise of the Socialist parties in Northern Europe, Australia, and a few other areas, and their relative decline in France and Italy. It noted that right after the war the Socialist parties in Eastern Europe had also declined, but subsequently had risen in influence as the result of growing working-class resentment at the Communists' behavior in those countries. The conclusion drawn from this discussion was that it was still correct policy for the Trotskyists to work within the socialist parties in some countries.

Finally, this document noted the left turn of the Communist parties following their ouster from a number of European govern-

ments during the preceding year. The resolution admitted that this left turn was creating new difficulties for the Trotskyists.²⁸

The Colonial Resolution

The colonial resolution was entitled "The Struggle of the Colonial Peoples and the World Revolution." It was introduced by Pierre Frank.²⁹ The resolution had an extensive survey of the decline of imperialism in the postwar world. There was specific discussion of the roles of Great Britain, France and the Netherlands, and particular emphasis on the growth of United States imperialist influence at the expense of these older colonial powers. The document stressed the change of strategy of the imperialist regimes, with their turning over the direct responsibility of government to the native bourgeoisie and its parties, while (it was asserted) maintaining continuing control by the metropole over the economies of the colonial countries.

The resolution stressed the "traitorous" role of the Communist parties in these countries, particularly during the 1941-1945 period when they had thrown all of their influence behind the war against the Axis. It noted the relatively modest influence of the Socialist parties in the colonial countries. There was also discussion of the importance of the linkages of the Communist and Socialist parties of the metropole and those of the colonies.

Finally, there was discussion in the document of the role of the Fourth International in the colonial areas. After expounding upon the situation in several countries, the resolution concluded:

It is to the IV International that falls the task of constructing the first real workers parties in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Its mission is to save the proletariat of those countries from the painful defeats of the European proletariat. It is the first International which has effec-

tively united in its leadership the most qualified representatives of the young colonial proletariat. Its ideas can today expand beyond the iron curtains, the jungles and the oceans with astonishing rapidity, from Black Africa to Japan, from Korea to Egypt. The IV International will prepare on a terrain virgin of working-class defeats the most radical upheavals that history has ever known.³⁰

The Debate on the Russian Question

The most bitterly argued issue at the Second World Congress of the Fourth International was that of the nature of the Soviet Union and of the East European countries occupied by the USSR after World War II. The resolution on this subject was entitled "The USSR and Stalinism," and it was introduced by Ernest Mandel.³¹

The Mandel resolution was bitterly opposed by a substantial number of the delegates. They by no means agreed on what should be substituted for the ideas presented by the majority, but they were united in their condemnation of the positions introduced by Mandel.

"The USSR and Stalinism" presented the "orthodox" Trotskyist position. It continued to portray the Soviet situation as one in which the only alternatives were between advancing toward socialism and retreating to capitalism. Indeed, there was emphasis in the resolution on certain supposed trends towards a return to capitalism in postwar developments, such as the alleged growth of the capitalist market in the production and distribution of agricultural and artisanal goods. The Soviet bureaucracy was said to be unable to prevent such developments.

There was also the usual Trotskyist denunciation of the political tyranny of the Stalinist regime and emphasis on the fact that the workers were in a powerless position. Nevertheless, the resolution concluded on this point that "if we continue to apply to this social organism the formula

'degenerated workers state' we are perfectly conscious of the need to complete it with more detailed precision. In reality, no exact definition of the present Russian society is possible without long circumlocution. The relative superiority of this formula, compared with all the others proposed so far consists of this: it puts emphasis at the same time on the non-capitalist character of the USSR and on the instability of its social arrangements, which have not yet acquired and will not acquire during the immediate future years a definitive historic physiognomy."³²

The document put forth, in considerable detail, the traditional Trotskyist position in favor of a "political" revolution in the USSR—quoting extensively from the 1938 Transitional Program in the process. It added that the Russian Bolshevik-Leninists "will claim above all the immediate withdrawal of Russian occupation troops from all occupied countries, and the application of the democratic right of self-determination, including separation of all the national minorities in the USSR, fighting for independent Ukrainian, White Russian, Estonian, Lithuanian etc. socialist republics."³³

The new problem with which the 1948 document had to deal was a definition of the nature of the East European regimes established by the Stalinists. It argued that there had been a "compromise" between the Soviet bureaucracy and capitalist elements in the East European countries. As a consequence each country "remains a bourgeois state (a) because their *structure* remains bourgeois. No part of the old bureaucratic machine of the bourgeois State had been destroyed. The Stalinists have only taken the place of certain elements of the bourgeois state apparatus (b) because their *function* remains bourgeois . . . defends a property which, in spite of diverse and hybrid forms remains fundamentally bourgeois in nature."

The resolution went further than this. It argued that the East European countries

"present at the same time an *extreme form of Bonapartism*, the Stalinized State having only acquired a large degree of independence of the bourgeoisie as of the proletariat . . . above all because of its intimate association with the Soviet state apparatus and the dominant force that that apparatus now possesses in East Europe. . . ."34

The Russian resolution also took note of alternative explanations which had been offered of the nature of the Soviet Union, that is, the "state capitalist" and "bureaucratic collectivist" definitions. It rejected both of these.³⁵

The Russian resolution concluded with the declaration that "the construction of the IV International is at present the essential condition for the amplification and the victorious conclusion of the workers revolutionary struggles throughout the globe. A victorious solution of this task 'will resolve' with the facts the Russian question through the victory of the IV Russian Revolution. History will demonstrate that an exact analysis of this phenomenon, Stalinism, is one of the bases for the realization of our historic mission."³⁶

From Max Shachtman's subsequent report on the congress one can judge the nature of the argument of those opposed to the majority position on the Russian issue.

The traditional theory of the Trotskyist movement on Russia was completely shipwrecked during the war. . . . The Stalinist bureaucracy did *not* disintegrate during the war. . . . The bureaucracy did *not* prove incapable of defending its country . . . its rule, its social system and its economy from enemy attack. . . . The bureaucracy did *not* capitulate to capitalism or its capitalist allies. . . . On the contrary, it not only fought and fights tenaciously for the maintenance of nationalized property, which is the property of its state, and the indispensable economic foundation of its rule, but it managed to destroy the economic foundation of the bourgeoisie

in a number of other countries and to replace it with nationalized property.³⁷

With the triumph of the Stalinist counterrevolution, the working class was expropriated politically and a new state power established which maintained and even extended the form and predominance of collective, or nationalized or statified property. *Consequently*, it established new and fundamentally different relations in the process of production. . . . The worker, as an individual or as a class, has absolutely nothing to do with determining the production relations, with determining the relations of his class to the process or the conditions of production or the relations to it of those who, as a social group, control and decide the conditions of production. Like *all* ruling classes, the latter thereby control and decide the distribution of the surplus product extracted from the producers.³⁸

Max Shachtman wrote elsewhere about the opposition argument against the majority resolution's definition of the East European regimes: "My argument, much more exactly, was this: *If* Russia was a 'degenerated workers state'—which I denied—then so were the new satellites, by virtue of the identity of socio-economic and political structures and forms, which introduced into our 'doctrine' the twin embarrassments that a proletarian revolution had taken place in the satellites without a proletariat or a revolutionary party; and that you could have a 'degenerated workers state' before you ever had a {nondegenerated} workers state. I did not say at all that on balance they were degenerated workers states, but that, like Russia, they were reactionary, bureaucratic-collectivist states."³⁹

Joseph Hansen has noted that there was another minority at the congress which "would have liked to have called them degenerated workers' states, but could hardly do so in all consistency since they had originated under the bureaucratic military aus-

pices of the Kremlin regime and therefore were 'degenerated' to begin with. The minority therefore called them 'deformed' workers states. . . . The minority position, it should be added, eventually was adopted by the majority of all sectors of the world Trotskyist movement, becoming the official position of the Fourth International."⁴⁰ This acceptance of the 1948 congress minority position took place at a Plenum of the IEC in April 1949 and was ratified by the Third World Congress in August 1951.⁴¹

Max Shachtman noted that "those of us who supported the position of the Workers Party—that Russia and the buffer countries are bureaucratic-collectivist states—voted for the resolution of the French Chau lieu group which, while not identical with our position was sufficiently close to it for purposes of the record vote. This resolution was supported by the delegates from the Chau lieu group, the German section, the Irish section, the Indo-Chinese October group and the Workers Party."⁴²

Pierre Frank has observed that "the question of the class nature of the Soviet Union and the question of the defense of the Soviet Union had been continuously raised inside the Trotskyist movement and had provoked many splits. The Second World Congress marked the end of the great debates on these questions inside the Fourth International. Afterwards, on the basis of the definition of the Soviet Union as a 'degenerated workers state' the debates took place on the transformations which took place there, their significance, and their consequences in relation to political tasks."⁴³

The New Statutes and General Orientation of the 1948 Congress

One final aspect of the Second World Congress worthy of note, particularly in view of the controversy which arose in the Fourth International in the early 1950s, is the gen-

eral orientation of the congress. This was reflected both in the new statutes and in some of the resolutions adopted by the congress.

The new statutes adopted by the 1948 congress were written by Sherry Mangan (Phelan).⁴⁴ They were considerably more extensive and detailed than the ones which had been ratified a decade earlier, and were preceded by a longish preamble containing a statement of the general strategic "line" of the International at that time.⁴⁵ Although as we have indicated, the Second Congress decided that "entrism" into Socialist parties might be justified in a few countries, the orientation was generally to be towards setting up independent revolutionary parties.

The preamble to the statutes proclaimed that "in each country the leadership of the proletariat must be taken from the counter-revolutionary Social Democracy and the Stalinist traitors. The chains which they have forged to fetter and immobilize the working masses must be broken. It is only in resolutely breaking both with the classic reformism of Social Democracy and with Stalinist neoreformism that the proletariat of each country can build the revolutionary party without which no struggle for socialism can be crowned with success."⁴⁶

The resolution on the Russian question took basically the same line. In its discussion of "The Struggle Against Stalinism," it asserted that "the breakaway from the Stalinist organizations will be a long and painful process which is merged essentially with the construction of the revolutionary party. By a constant intervention, intelligent and patient, in all of the workers' struggles, in all the movements of discontent and revolt of the masses, the revolutionary militants must progressively gain the confidence of the most advanced worker elements, for the purpose of establishing a true new leadership for the next revolutionary wave. They will play this role only to the extent that they have their own characteris-

tics and the masses can no way confuse them with 'left Stalinism.'"⁴⁷

Between the 1948 and 1951 Meetings

The Yugoslav Question

The next congress of the Fourth International did not take place until 1951. In the interim at least two important events which occurred are worthy of some note. These are the Trotskyists' reaction to the Titoite defection from Stalinism and the break of Natalia Sedova Trotsky with the Fourth International.

Only two months after the end of the Second World Congress of the Fourth International the Cominform declared the "excommunication" of the Yugoslav Communist Party and the Tito regime from the ranks of orthodox Stalinism. This event, totally unexpected by the Trotskyists as by virtually all other outside observers, had the immediate effect of arousing great hope and support in Trotskyist ranks.

The Secretariat of the Fourth International dispatched a series of open letters to the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party. These sought a rapprochement with the Yugoslav party. That of July 13 went "into painstaking detail on what the Stalinist regime should do. It should adopt the road of the class struggle; it should establish full workers' democracy; it should nationalize the land; it should organize a Balkan Socialist Federation; it should adopt all the principles of Leninism; it should start a 'vast campaign of re-education'; there should be a 'real mass mobilization, to be brought about by your party.'"

The Fourth International assured the Titoites that "your party has nothing to fear from such a development. The confidence of the masses in it will grow enormously and it will become the effective collective expression of the interests and desires of the proletariat of its country."

In its September 1948 open letter to Tito

and his followers the Fourth International urged them to give up "party monolithism." It told them that "If you cling to this conception you will head inexorably toward the foundering of your revolution and of your own party."⁴⁸

The Trotskyists established contacts with the Titoites. The Fourth International had some relations with the Yugoslav Embassy in Paris. The International and the Embassy jointly arranged for sending work brigades of young French Trotskyists to Yugoslavia during the summer of 1950.⁴⁹

But the courting of the Yugoslavs by the Trotskyists did not last for long. By early 1952 Michel Pablo was noting that "the Yugoslav CP caught between internal difficulties and the increasing pressure of imperialism began to give ground to the latter." The Tito leadership, Pablo added, had been brought to "break the class front."⁵⁰

Natalia Sedova Trotsky's Defection

Albert Glotzer has maintained that after World War II Leon Trotsky's widow, Natalia Sedova Trotsky, sympathized more with the Shachtmanites than she did with the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International.⁵¹ Certainly she supported the Goldman-Morrow faction's efforts to bring the Shachtmanites back to the SWP.⁵² However, until 1951 she continued to think of herself and be thought of as a member of the Fourth International.

On May 9, 1951 Natalia Sedova directed a letter to the Executive Committee of the Fourth International and the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party announcing her separation from the International. She started by noting that they knew that she had had certain disagreements with them "since the end of the war or even earlier," but that "now you have come to a point at which it is not possible for me to remain silent or limit myself to protesting privately. I must publicly express my opinion."

She noted that "this step . . . is for me grave and difficult. . . . But there is no other way. . . . I have decided to inform you that I find no other solution than communicating openly to you that our disagreements are such that it is impossible for me to remain in your ranks." She then listed the basic elements of her disagreements with the Fourth International.

First of all, "Obsessed with old formulas no longer of use, you continue considering the Stalinist State as a Workers State. I cannot and don't wish to follow you in this. Stalinism and the Stalinist State have nothing more in common with a Workers State nor with Socialism. They are the worst and most dangerous enemies of Socialism and the working class."

She also disagreed with the Fourth International's position that the East European regimes were Workers States. She commented that "propagating these monstrous falsehoods among the labor vanguard, you deny yourselves and the IV International all basic reason for your existence as a world party of the socialist revolution. In the past we have always considered Stalinism as a counterrevolutionary force in the widest meaning of the term. You no longer think in this way, but I continue thinking so."

In the third place, she disagreed with their enchantment with the Tito regime in Yugoslavia. She argued that "his regime doesn't differ fundamentally from that of Stalin. It is absurd to think or say that the revolutionary leadership of the Yugoslav people will arise from this bureaucracy, or in any other way than struggle against that same bureaucracy."

Finally, she wrote the Fourth International and SWP leaders, "The most insupportable of all is the position you have on war . . . in the face of everything that has happened in recent years, you continue supporting and committing the whole movement to the defense of the Stalinist State. You are now justifying the Stalinist armies

in the war which they are forcing the tormented people of Korea to suffer. I cannot and do not desire to follow you."

Natalia Sedova ended her letter by saying that "in the message that the recent convention of the SWP sent me, you write that the ideas of Trotsky continue serving as your guide. I must confess that I have read this with great bitterness. As you can see from the previous lines, I don't see those ideas in your policy. I believe in those ideas, and I remain convinced that the only way to get out of the present situation is the socialist revolution, the emancipation of the world proletariat by its own efforts."⁵³

The New Strategy of the Fourth International

The Third World Congress of the Fourth International took place in August 1951. Although the major resolution adopted there seemed to have the support of almost all of the delegates, they were in fact the first step towards a new strategic line for the International which was to generate a process of splintering of International Trotskyism which had not ended more than three decades later.

A plenum of the International Executive Committee met in November 1950 and adopted a series of "theses" to be submitted to the Third World Congress. The principal author of the document involved was Michel Raptis, better known as Michel Pablo, who was international secretary, and undoubtedly reflected his and many of his colleagues' reaction to events of the post-World War II period.

First, they were disillusioned by the fact that the Trotskyists had made disappointingly slow progress in building national sections and the World Party of the Socialist Revolution. The great optimism on this count which had been expressed in the 1946 and 1948 International gatherings had drastically receded. In fact, by late 1950, instead of seeing the triumph of the world revolu-

tion under Fourth International leadership as something which would occur in the proximate future, Pablo and his friends saw the advent of socialism throughout the world in very long-run terms indeed.

Second, the Yugoslav split with Moscow had served to convince Pablo and his associates that the Stalinist parties might not necessarily be as unalterably subordinate to Stalin as they had previously thought, and the advent to power of a Communist regime in a major country, China, which seemed to presage the necessity for a kind of Soviet-Chinese partnership in leading the Stalinists, reinforced the hopes of growing divergence in the Stalinist ranks.

Third, the polarization of world politics resulting from the Cold War and culminating in the Korean War seemed to Pablo and his supporters to provide an urgency in terms of time which had not existed before. They foresaw the advent of World War III, accompanied by the long-expected economic crisis in the "imperialist" world, as an immediate prospect.

These factors made it necessary, in the view of Pablo and his friends, for the Fourth International to adopt a completely new strategy. It was this strategy which was soon to split the Fourth International into warring factions.

Pablo first clearly put forth his new view of world affairs in an article "Where Are We Going?" which appeared in March 1951. This article started out by tracing what Pablo thought to be the dismantling of the world capitalist market due to the Chinese revolution and the disintegration of the colonial system. He maintained that the result of this was that "the capitalist regime having lost its equilibrium, now has no possibility of recovering it *without restoring a world market embracing the lost territories, and without a more equalized redistribution of forces within the imperialist camp.*" As a consequence of this, "capitalism is now rapidly heading toward war, for it has no other short or long-term way out, and . . . this pro-

cess cannot be stopped short of the unavoidable destruction of the regime. . . ."54

This new war would be of a special kind. Pablo argued that "such a war would take on, from the very beginning, the character of an *international civil war*, especially in Europe and in Asia. These continents would rapidly pass over under the control of the Soviet bureaucracy, of the Communist Parties, or of the revolutionary masses. . . . These two conceptions of *Revolution* and of *War*, far from being in opposition or being differentiated as two significantly different stages of development, *are approaching each other more closely and becoming so interlinked as to be almost indistinguishable under certain circumstances and at certain times.*"

The result of this War-Revolution, according to Pablo, was that "this pattern of development of the Revolution, which is the real pattern and has its reasons for existence, implies a more complicated, more tortuous, longer passage from capitalism to socialism, lending transitional form to society and to proletarian power."⁵⁵

Clearly, Pablo had developed a difference with the traditional Trotskyist position that Stalinist regimes could only play a counter-revolutionary role. He argued that "the rise of Communist Parties to power is not the consequence of a capacity of Stalinism to struggle for the Revolution, *does not alter the internationally counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism*, but it is the product of an exceptional combination of circumstances which has imposed the seizure of power either upon the Soviet bureaucracy (in the case of the European buffer zone), or upon certain Communist Parties (Yugoslavia, China)."⁵⁶

He chastised those who were worried by "the bogie of the 'world-wide domination of Stalinism,'" saying that such worry came from:

. . . lack of a correct theoretical understanding of Stalinism, that the contradic-

tions inherent in its nature, far from being ameliorated or eliminated in direct proportion to its expansion, are in reality being reproduced on an ever greater scale and will provoke its destruction. This will take place in two ways: by the counterblows of the anti-capitalist victories in the world and even in the USSR stimulating resistance of the masses to the bureaucracy, for all bureaucracy, in direct proportion as the capitalist regime suffers setbacks and an ever increasing and economically more important sector escapes from capitalism and organizes itself on the basis of a statized and planned economy, thereby stimulating the growth of the productive forces.⁵⁷

People who despair of the fate of humanity because Stalinism endures and even achieves victories, tailor History to their own personal measure. They really desire that the entire process of the transformation of capitalist society into socialism would be accomplished within the span of their brief lives so that they can be rewarded for their efforts on behalf of the Revolution. As for us . . . this transformation will probably take an entire historical period of several centuries and will in the meantime be filled with forms and regimes transitional between capitalism and socialism and necessarily deviating from 'pure' forms and norms.⁵⁸

Faced with the long-run perspective that the Stalinists, whether they wanted to or not, would be the leaders of a growing revolutionary wave, Pablo took his stand with them:

Our movement is naturally not "neutral" between the so-called two blocs, that of imperialism and that led by the USSR. . . . Our support to the colonial revolutions now going on, despite their Stalinist or Stalinized leadership, in their struggle against imperialism is even *unconditional*. . . . Our movement is *independent* of Moscow's policy, of the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy, in the sense that it is

not at all bound by this policy. . . . Without having thought through all these questions . . . it would be impossible for us in the days ahead to link ourselves with the mass revolutionary movement as well as with the proletarian vanguard, which in Asia and in Europe follow Stalinist or Stalinized leaderships.⁵⁹

Pablo then presented the strategy which he suggested for the Fourth International. For Asia, he urged that "the new conditions in which the Communist Parties in those Asian countries which are currently going through a revolution find themselves, dictate to us, as a general attitude toward them . . . that of a Left Opposition which gives *critical support*." But "in Europe, where the Communist parties manipulate the proletarian masses. . . . *Much closer to the ranks of those parties: such is our slogan. . . .*" Finally, "in those countries where Stalinism is practically nonexistent or exercises weak influence over the masses, our movement will strive to become the principal leadership of the proletariat in the years ahead: in the United States, England, Germany, Canada, in all of Latin America, in Australia, Indonesia, perhaps in India. The main immediate future of our movement resides far more in those places than in countries where the Stalinist influence still reigns."⁶⁰

The Third World Congress

The first steps in developing the new orientation favored by Pablo were taken at the Third World Congress, which met in August 1951. It was attended by seventy-four delegates from twenty-five countries.⁶¹

Pierre Frank, who after some hesitation became one of Pablo's most important supporters, has outlined the major elements of the central document adopted by a thirty to three margin (with one abstention) at the Third Congress, that is, the "Theses on the International Perspective and the Orientation of the Fourth International." The only

opposition to the passage of the Theses came from a majority of the French delegates.

Frank wrote that the document "began by stressing the increasing preparations of various kinds being made at that time for a new world war. . . . These theses did not dismiss the possibility of temporary compromises between the United States and the Soviet Union, above all because of the Kremlin's conservative policy, but they projected such a new world war in the relatively near future."

Frank went on to note that the Theses "added that, by its nature, this war would be a 'war-revolution,' in which an imperialist victory would be problematical. Linked to this perspective on the war was the point of view that the arms race economy would have catastrophic consequences on the economic situation: inflation, lowering of the workers' standard of living, etc."

Furthermore:

From what had happened in Yugoslavia and China, these theses concluded that the Communist parties, even when they had a reformist policy, were not exactly classical reformist parties; that they were not as yet mere instruments of the Kremlin under any and all circumstances; that, under certain conditions of exceptional mass movement, they could be drawn into going beyond orientations corresponding to the policies of the Kremlin and beyond their strictly reformist objectives. These theses insistently stressed the concrete, contradictory relationships in operation between the masses, the Communist parties, and the Soviet bureaucracy; and they stated that the Trotskyists had to take advantage of these contradictions and in order to do so, had to become part of the real mass movement, especially where Communist parties were mass organizations.⁶²

The Tenth Plenum

The strategic turn started in the Third World Congress was completed in the Tenth Ple-

num of the International Executive Committee in February 1952. That meeting endorsed a report by Pablo explaining in detail the full meaning of the new strategy. Pablo started by claiming that "the tactical conception defined by the Third World Congress simultaneously trains its sights in three distinct directions according to the special characteristic of the mass movement in each country: essentially independent work; work directed toward the reformist workers and organizations; work directed toward the Stalinist workers and organizations."

The areas in which "essentially independent work" should continue by the Fourth International's affiliates included "above all Latin America and Ceylon." He added that "the United States, India, the countries of the Middle East, the African colonies, can be considered a part of this category with the following reservations: In all these countries the Trotskyists must from now on act as the revolutionary leadership of the masses even though it may be necessary in some of these countries to go through an experience with certain reformist, centrist or simply national currents and formations."

To explain what he meant by this, Pablo cited the advocacy of the establishment of a Labor Party by the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. He also noted the need for "penetration of the national movements which are now convulsing" many of the colonial countries.⁶³

In those countries in which the Socialist parties remained the dominant working-class political organizations, Pablo argued that "the question of entry, even total entry, has to be faced if it hasn't as yet been realized, because for all these countries it is infinitely probable that except for new and at present unforeseeable developments, the movement of mass radicalization and the first stages of the revolution, of the objective revolutionary situation, will manifest themselves within the framework of these organizations."

However, in this case, the "entrism" into the socialist parties was to be different from that of the 1930s. Pablo noted that "we are entering them in order to remain there for a long time, banking on the great possibility which exists of seeing these parties, placed under new conditions, develop centrist tendencies which will lead a whole stage of the radicalization of the masses and of the objective revolutionary processes in their respective countries."⁶⁴

However, the really innovative part of the strategy proposed by Pablo, and accepted by the Tenth Plenum, was in the approach to the Stalinist parties, where they were the majority working-class party. There, too, he proposed entrism, but with a difference. He explained that "in regard to the CPs—and at least for a period—we cannot practice total entry but entrism of a specific kind, *sui generis*. . . ."⁶⁵ The reason for this particular kind of entrism into the Communist parties was "the special character of the Stalinist movement, the extremely bureaucratic leadership of which prevents us from proceeding exactly as we would in a reformist movement. . . . *The nature of the Stalinist movement imposes on us in reality a combination of independent work along with the task of entry, with the following characteristics: our independent work must be understood as having as its chief aim to assist the work of entry, and similarly sets its face primarily toward the Stalinist workers. The work of entry will become broader and broader as the war comes nearer.*"

Pablo elaborated on this notion of entry *sui generis*:

The independent sector will assist the "entrant" work by supplying the forces, directing them from the outside, developing the themes of our policy and our concrete criticisms of the Stalinist policy, etc. . . . in simple, clear fashion, with no restrictions other than those of wording and formulation, which must be studied so as to find increasing response from the Stalinist militants.

The independent sector will continue all of the present essential activities, in the plants, the trade unions, among the youth, and will continue the work of recruiting, especially among the best elements within the Stalinist movement who have been pointed out by our comrades who have made the entry. [The independent sector would consist of] those who are strictly necessary for conducting the work as a whole, plus those who for one reason or another, and despite all our efforts, are not able to integrate themselves into the Stalinist movement; plus those for whom we consider it preferable and even necessary that they should carry on the work of Trotskyist indoctrination in the independent sector.⁶⁶

Conclusion

By the early months of 1952 the Fourth International had made a major change in policy, adopting a basically new strategy (which it called a tactic). That strategy, although having certain apparent similarities to the "French Turn" of the 1930s, was fundamentally different.

The French Turn executed under Trotsky's direction essentially called for hit-and-run raids into a number of socialist parties with the hope either of quickly gaining control of them or leaving with sufficient new recruits for the Trotskyist parties to begin to become "mass organizations." However, in view of the International's new perspective of "several centuries" during which Stalinism or something like it might be the major "revolutionary force," the policy of the early 1950s was basically different.

For one thing, "entrism" this time involved the Communist parties as well as the socialists. For another, all indications were that the entry into both socialist and Communist parties was intended to be for an unlimited period of time. Although it was apparent that in the cases of entry into socialist parties it was proposed that clearly Trotskyist factions be organized in them,

the situation was more problematical in the case of those Trotskyite groups which entered the Communist Parties of their respective countries. Although the plan was to maintain a small core group outside of the Communist Party, the relations it was to maintain with the Trotskyists inside the party certainly remained obscure. Even more obscure was the way in which all of these diverse groups could be kept together in a single international organization.

Understandably, this radical break with the past policies of International Trotskyism ultimately aroused considerable opposition. By 1953-54 that opposition resulted in a split in the Fourth International. International Trotskyism has never recovered from that split.

Fourth International: Split and Partial Reunion

During the early 1950s three of its most important national sections, together with several smaller ones broke away from the established Fourth International and set up a rival organization. The three were the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, and the majority groups of the French and British sections of the International.

Only one of these breakaways, that of the French section, was caused directly by the new strategy developed by the Fourth International under the leadership of Michel Pablo. However, that strategy was also a major contributing factor in the splitting away of the British and American sections, and the new International Committee of the Fourth International which they established took a strong position against "Pabloism," that is, the turn in policy which the Fourth International had taken under Pablo's leadership.

The Beginnings of the Split

In the appropriate sections of this book dealing with those national sections, we have traced in some detail the internal controversies which determined the split of the French, American and British sections from the International. Here it is sufficient to recapitulate very briefly those events, and to trace how they resulted in the establishment of a rival to the existing apparatus of the Fourth International.

The crisis first arose in the French section. Early in 1952 the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI) was ordered by the International to undertake the policy of "entrism *sui generis*" and to direct its major efforts to trying to get its members into the French Communist Party. The majority of the leadership of the PCI rejected this notion, as a

result of which, in March 1952, the International stepped in and in effect converted the majority of the Political Bureau of the PCI into a minority pending the next party congress, scheduled to meet in May.

When the Eighth Congress of the PCI met, it passed a resolution declaring that "a grave danger menaces the future and even the existence of the Fourth International. . . Revisionist conceptions born of cowardice and petty-bourgeois impressionism have appeared within its leadership. The still great weakness of the International, cut off from the life of the sections, has momentarily facilitated the installation of a system of personal rule, basing itself and its anti-democratic methods on revisionism of the Trotskyist program and abandonment of the Marxist method."¹ Shortly afterward, the majority of the French section were expelled by the International Executive Committee.²

At that point the party of the French majority stood alone. As Fred Feldman has written, "many of the forces which later supported the International Committee faction still had considerable confidence in Pablo. Since these forces . . . were not convinced that Pablo was on a revisionist course, they thought the French refusal to carry out the 'deep entry' tactic reflected a sectarian bent. Therefore, they made no objection at the time to Pablo's moves and even supported them."³

In the meantime, a split began to develop in the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. At its inception this struggle had little to do with "Pabloism." Bert Cochran and most of those associated with him wanted very different kinds of changes in policy and in the nature of the SWP from Pablo's general proposals. George Clarke, who had been the SWP representative at the headquarters of the Fourth International and had become a strong supporter of Pablo, sided with the Cochranites upon his return home.

As a consequence of this situation, and particularly of Clarke's insistence that he represented the thinking of the Internation-

al's leadership, James Cannon and others in the SWP majority became increasingly convinced that Pablo was using his influence on behalf of the SWP minority. As the controversy grew more heated, Pablo did in fact side with the minority, particularly with Clarke. This finally provoked a break between the Cannon group and the majority in the Fourth International leadership.⁴

As the Pablo-SWP quarrel intensified the leadership of the British section was drawn into it. In that case the controversy arose originally over a document which had been submitted to the sections in the name of the International Secretariat, as part of the preparations for the forthcoming Fourth Congress of the International. This document, entitled "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism," put forth once again the ideas of Pablo about the changed nature of the Soviet leadership and the Stalinist parties in general. When it was first discussed in the Executive Committee of the British Section, Gerry Healy, the leading figure in the section, tentatively presented certain modifications to the document. His right to do so was then challenged by Jack Lawrence, who claimed that since Healy was a member of the International Secretariat he was bound by its discipline not to dissent from the document which it had sponsored.

Subsequently, on September 23, 1953, the Bureau of the International Secretariat wrote to Healy in the same vein.⁵ But Healy was incensed rather than mollified by this "advice" from the headquarters of the International. He took steps to call a meeting of the section's National Committee to remove members of the Lawrence faction from the direction of the section's periodical.

Clearly, the British situation was related to the quarrel between the SWP and Pablo. At one point Healy was summoned to the International headquarters in Paris, where he was assured that if the British section would line up against the SWP, Pablo and his associates would see to it that the Lawrence

faction ended its activities. Healy demurred.⁶

Emergence of the International Committee

Events in the last months of 1953 moved quickly towards an organic split in the Fourth International. On October 3-4 a meeting was held in London of representatives of the British section of the International, the French majority group which had been expelled the year before, and the Swiss section. Sam Gordon of the swp also attended "individually." That meeting decided to set up a "provisional committee" of two representatives each from the French, British, and Swiss sections. At that point what was being organized was a faction within the International. The meeting declared that "the delegates declare their political agreement on the international perspective on the character of the Soviet bureaucracy and Stalinism. They decide to undertake together the defense of Trotskyism against Pabloist revisionism and the struggle against the liquidation of the Fourth International." They also agreed to prepare documents for submission to the Fourth Congress of the International.⁷

Then on November 7-8, 1953, the Socialist Workers Party held a plenum at which it expelled the Cochranite faction. The International Secretariat sent a letter to this meeting. After noting that the swp had not yet submitted any critique of the documents for the Fourth World Congress, this letter claimed that "to build a faction under such conditions, then to bring it forth brusquely in the late day and then violently oppose it to the International leadership becomes, frankly, an unprincipled, unspeakable operation, profoundly alien to the traditions and nature of our movement."⁸ It ended saying, "avoid a fundamental political crystallization on this or that line before previous discussion between delegations responsible to your leadership and the IS or the IEC. Put

above any other consideration the unity of our International movement, the unity of your own organization."⁹

When the swp leadership clearly did not follow its advice, the IS issued a "Letter from the Bureau of the International Secretariat to the Leaderships of All Sections," signed by Pablo, Pierre Frank, and Ernest Mandel, and dated November 15, 1953. It began, "The most revolting operation has just been launched against the unity of the International. The majority of the American organization, cynically defying the most elementary rules of our international movement, and its traditions as well as its leadership have just excluded by the decision of its Plenum of November 7-8, the minority which declares itself in agreement with the line of the International."¹⁰

After noting that Cannon and his associates, as well as Healy, had until recently supported the International leadership, the letter noted that "their 100 percent about-face of today dates only a few months back. How then to explain it?"

The letter answered its own question.

If they now act in this way it is above all to safeguard the personal clique regime in the midst of their organizations that they consider threatened by the extension of the influence of the International as a centralized world party. . . . Fixed on old ideas and schemas, educated in the old organizational atmosphere of our movement, they really represent politically and organizationally the sectarian tendency which recoils from the movement of the Social Democratic or Stalinist masses or feels itself ill at ease within it. They further remain profoundly resistant to all real integration into a centralized world party. . . .¹¹

This letter then proceeded virtually to read the swp out of the international Trotskyist movement.

The International was, remains and will remain a political movement and a princi-

pled organization. It will not compromise on its principles, it will never permit the expulsions effected by Cannon, nor those which Burns [Gerry Healy] is preparing in England. With all our forces we ask the IEC to stigmatize these measures, to enjoin those who have taken them to immediately withdraw them and to reintegrate forthwith the expelled members within their organizations. Any other road followed by anyone whatsoever could only place them outside our movement.¹²

Meanwhile, in addition to expelling the Cochranites the swp plenum had adopted "A Letter to Trotskyists Throughout the World." This document, after reciting a bit of the postwar history of the Fourth International "restated" the fundamental principles of Trotskyism. It then proclaimed that "these fundamental principles established by Leon Trotsky retain full validity in the increasingly complex and fluid politics of the world today. . . ."

Then the letter argued that "these principles have been abandoned by Pablo. In place of emphasizing the danger of a new barbarism, he sees the drive toward socialism as 'irreversible'; yet he does not see socialism coming within our generation or some generations to come. Instead, he has advanced the concept of an 'engulfing' wave of revolutions that give birth to nothing but 'deformed,' that is, Stalin-type workers states which are to last for 'centuries.' "¹³

After criticizing a number of specific acts of the Pablo leadership, including its support of the Cochranites, the letter said:

To sum up: The lines of cleavage between Pablo's revisionism and orthodox Trotskyism are so deep that no compromise is possible either politically or organizationally. . . . If we may offer advice to the sections of the Fourth International from our enforced position outside the ranks, we think the time has come to act and to act decisively. The time has come for the orthodox Trotskyist majority of the

Fourth International to assert their will against Pablo's usurpation of authority. They should in addition safeguard the administration of the affairs of the Fourth International by removing Pablo and his agents from office and replacing them with cadres who have proved in action that they know how to uphold orthodox Trotskyism and keep the movement on a correct course both politically and organizationally.¹⁴

This appeal of the swp was very soon answered. On November 23, 1953, a "Resolution Forming the International Committee" was issued from Paris, over the signatures of Gerry Healy, Bleibtreu of the French majority, Smith of the "New Zealand" Section (apparently Farrell Dobbs of the swp) and Jacques of the Swiss section. It proclaimed:

1. We affirm our solidarity with the fundamental line of the appeal of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party to the Trotskyists throughout the world, and particularly with the definition therein of the programmatic bases of Trotskyism. . . . 2. We consider as having forfeited its power the International Secretariat of the Pabloist usurpers, which is devoting its activity to the revisionism of Trotskyism, the liquidation of the International and the destruction of its cadres. 3. Representing the vast majority of the Trotskyist forces of the International, we decide to constitute an INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. . . .

We call on the leadership of all the sections of the Fourth International to establish relations with the leadership which represents the Trotskyist program and the majority of the forces of the International. Every responsible cadre, every Trotskyist militant concerned with the unity of the International and the future of his national section, must clearly and swiftly take a position as between the revisionist and liquidationist center of the Pabloist

usurpers, and the International Committee of the Fourth International.¹⁵

The Fourteenth Plenum of the IEC of the Fourth International, which met December 26–28, 1953, retaliated against the signers of the SWP's "letter" and the resolution establishing the International Committee. It resolved: "a. To suspend from membership in the International all members of the IEC who signed the split appeal which appeared in *The Militant* of November 16, 1953, or the appeal of the 'Committee of the Fourth International,' or who support the appeals, and endeavor to rally the sections of the International on this basis. b. To suspend from their posts in the leadership of the sections all those who signed these appeals, or who support them and endeavor to rally the sections of the International on this basis. c. To leave the final decision on these cases to the Fourth World Congress."¹⁶

The Fourteenth Plenum also decided to recognize as official sections the minority groups of the SWP and of the British section.¹⁷ Finally, it replaced Gerry Healy on the IEC and the IS with John Lawrence, and added representatives of the German and Dutch sections to the International Secretariat.¹⁸

Those who had launched the International Committee were able to gain some additional recruits. These included the exiled Chinese section based in Hong Kong,¹⁹ and the Canadian section, although the Canadian group underwent a split as a consequence of this decision.²⁰

Of course, the International Committee had the support of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. An editorial in *The Militant* said that "the organization of the International Committee signifies that the Fourth International has once again proved its historic viability. It shows that no force on earth, external or internal, can destroy it."

The editorial concluded: "We hail the formation of the International Committee of

the Fourth International. Because we are compelled to remain outside the International organization due to the reactionary Voorhis Law of 1940, we are all the more interested and concerned with the development of the Fourth International. The International Committee insures the line of revolutionary continuity that extends from Lenin, through Trotsky and into the future victory of socialist mankind."²¹

The Pabloite leadership claimed to maintain within its ranks the great majority of the sections. In a letter addressed to the Chinese section the IS wrote that "the following sections: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, Cyprus, France, Germany, Great Britain (majority), Greece, Holland, Italy, Indochina, Peru, Uruguay, that is, the overwhelming majority have said that their organization is the only FI and condemn the split committee."²²

This claim was clearly exaggerated. The majority of the Canadian section had gone with the International Committee as had the majority of that of Great Britain. In the case of the Bolivian party, a split took place shortly after the schism in the Fourth International. Although the causes of that division in the Partido Obrero Revolucionario were domestic rather than international, one faction, that led by Hugo González Moscósó, aligned with the Pabloites, while the other, led by Guillermo Lora, sympathized with the International Committee, although it may well not have officially affiliated with it.²³

The Question of Unity and the Fourth World Congress

The Trotskyist party in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), sought to act as mediator in this conflict within the Fourth International. To this end, they insisted that all of the groups represented at the Third World Congress should also be invited to send delegates to the Fourth

World Congress. To facilitate this, the LSSP urged that the congress, scheduled for July 1954, be postponed. The Fourth International leaders refused such a move.

However, perhaps due to the pressure of the LSSP, the International Executive Committee sent a letter which, according to the document itself, was sent "to all those, without exception, who were members of the International at the time of the Third Congress and who by their own volition have placed themselves outside the organizational framework of the International, centralized world party."²⁴

Although this document was clearly partisan (arguing, for instance, that "The IEC has always been invested with the confidence of the vast majority of the International"), it did urge the recipients to "Submit any disputes you may have . . . to this Congress." It continued, "You no longer have confidence in the present leadership of the International, or its organization of this Congress? Offer concrete proposals as to how you envisage your participation in this Congress; state the conditions of the future functioning and leadership of the International which, if adopted or largely satisfied by the Congress, would in your opinion make possible the reestablishment of the unity of the International."

To receive these proposals, the IEC set up a "commission . . . which would function prior to the beginning of the Congress sessions. . . ." It named to this commission Leslie Goonewardene of Ceylon, Edward of Germany, Livio Maitan of Italy, Ernest Mandel, J. Posadas of Argentina, Bos of the Netherlands, Dumas of the pro-Pablo French group, and Serrano of the Bolivian POR. The letter argued that "the purpose of this commission is to assure your participation—genuine, not formal—in the Congress, in order to achieve the reunification of our international movement, with the Congress having the sovereign decision."²⁵

This letter of the IEC did not serve to bring about the reunification of the International.

It did arouse conflicting reactions among groups which had remained with the International Secretariat and the IEC. On the one hand, John Lawrence of Great Britain wrote, protesting, "as you know, I am completely opposed to your method in this question."²⁶ The Cochranite Socialist Union of America also protested, saying that "it is with a sense of strong urgency that we call upon the IEC to reverse the course and to reorient the entire struggle along correct lines."²⁷

On the other hand, the Ceylonese LSSP also protested, but from a different point of view. It argued that "the draft appeal as it stands can be construed as a factional document. . . . It is completely out of place for the IEC to make any such declaration. . . ." Therefore, Colin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, member and alternate member of the IEC for Ceylon, refused to sign the letter.²⁸

In the end, only those groups which stayed with the Pablo leadership were represented at the Fourth Congress.

The Pabloite Fourth International, 1953–1963

The Fourth International faction headed by Michel Pablo held three world congresses after the split at the end of 1953. Alongside these meetings there were intermittent negotiations for reestablishing the unity of the international Trotskyist movement which culminated in the so-called Reunification Congress of 1963 which, however, only succeeded in partially reuniting the forces of the Fourth International.

The Fourth Congress, which met in July 1954, was attended by delegates from organizations in twenty-one different countries. It dealt, understandably, with the problem of the split in the International, and also discussed and adopted several documents.²⁹

Most of the delegates to this congress supported the position which Pablo and his associates had maintained in the conflict with those sections which formed the Interna-

tional Committee. However, a minority, consisting principally of George Clarke from the Socialist Union of America, Murray Dawson of the Pabloite minority from Canada, Michele Mestre of the pro-Pablo PCI of France, and John Lawrence of the British minority, protested strongly against the compromises which Pablo had made with the Ceylonese LSSP. They finally walked out of the meeting. Fred Feldman has noted that "Mestre and Lawrence immediately joined the Communist parties in their respective countries."³⁰

The most important resolution of the Fourth World Congress was entitled "Rise and Decline of Stalinism." The draft of this document, which more or less repeated the position which Pablo had put forth in the previous few years that the Stalinist parties, whether they wanted to or not were increasingly being forced to take the leadership in revolutionary movements in various parts of the world, had been severely criticized by the LSSP of Ceylon. Although in the pre-congress discussion Ernest Mandel (under the name Ernest Germain) strongly answered the LSSP's criticisms, Pablo and his associates finally agreed to accept the modifications suggested by the LSSP.³¹

The Fifth Congress of the Pabloite faction of the International (which was usually referred to as the International Secretariat or IS) met in October 1957 and was attended by "about a hundred delegates and observers from twenty-five countries."³² The congress' discussions centered on three documents. The first of these, entitled "Economic Perspectives and International Policies," was presented by Pablo, and it recognized for the first time (for the Trotskyists) that a major world depression was not likely in the proximate future. It discussed the ways in which the capitalist regimes had prevented such a crisis, and noted that although revolutionary strikes in the capitalist countries were not likely soon, there might be extensive economic strikes.

This document also dealt with the econo-

mies of the "workers states," noting their rapid progress, and suggesting the need for rationalizing their economies. Pierre Frank has noted that "the document emphasized the basic role of workers democracy, not only as a political factor, but as indispensable for development in the economic area."

Finally, the economic document dealt with the situation in the colonial countries. It noted that some economic progress had been made there, but that relatively the colonial nations were falling farther behind the big industrial countries, and argued "that the result of this would be a growing impoverishment of the colonial masses and consequently the continuation of the objective conditions that were fanning the flames of colonial revolution."³³

The second document was on "Colonial Revolution Since the End of the Second World War," introduced by Pierre Frank. It "stressed the fact that it was the dominant feature of the postwar period; it had upset all the perspectives that had been made since the origin of the working class movement, even those made after the October Revolution. . . . The congress insisted on the necessity for the Trotskyist movement, especially for the sections in the imperialist countries, to devote a large part of its activity to aiding the colonial revolution."³⁴

Finally, the Fifth Congress came back to a new version of the previous meeting's document, "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism," adding another part to it, "The Decline and Fall of Stalinism." It was introduced by Ernest Mandel. The revised document, after tracing the rise of Stalinism, noted "the objective conditions of the new situation: the existence of several workers states, the USSR become the second world power, the revolutionary rise throughout the world." Pierre Frank has noted that "thus it demonstrates that henceforth there can be no danger, except in the highly improbable case of defeat in a world war, of a restoration of capitalism in the

Soviet Union," the first time an international Trotskyist meeting had made this fundamental change in the traditional "forward to Socialism or backward to capitalism" dichotomy. It claimed that the de-Stalinization launched by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU the year before constituted "measures of the self-defense—not self-liquidation—of the bureaucracy."³⁵

Frank concluded concerning this Fifth Congress that "the discussions . . . were broad in scope; certain points were strongly debated by various delegates, but there was no tendency struggle. The International had largely recovered; it came out, once again unanimously, in favor of reunification of the international movement."³⁶

The last international meeting of the Pabloite faction before "reunification," the Sixth Congress, met early in 1961 with "a hundred participants from about thirty countries." Pierre Frank noted that "because of the fierce and bitter—and politically impoverished—struggle waged by the Posadas faction, the discussions did not allow the International to make any real progress in its thinking. . . . But the documents ratified by the congress were not without importance."

One of these documents, introduced by Ernest Mandel, reviewed the world economic situation, recounting again the means by which the capitalist countries had avoided a major economic crisis. Also, although noting the continued advance of the "workers states," it "refuted Khrushchev's claim, widely believed in that period, to the effect that the USSR would rapidly surpass the USA on the economic plane."³⁷

Livio Maitan introduced the congress document on the colonial revolution. It "made a special study of the situation in a certain number of colonial zones or colonial countries. A great deal of space was allotted to the Algerian revolution. . . . A special resolution was devoted to Cuba, retracing the revolutionary process that had culminated only a

short time before in making the island a workers state, the first in the Western Hemisphere."³⁸

This time Pierre Frank introduced the resolution on Stalinism. It recounted the "reforms" undertaken by Khrushchev and "made a study of the new contradictions to which the Communist parties were subject. It pointed out the compromise between the Chinese and Soviet leaderships embodied in the text adopted several weeks earlier in the Moscow conference of eighty-one communist and workers parties and concluded that this compromise could not be a lasting one, that the Sino-Soviet crisis would inevitably erupt again."

This was the first Fourth International Congress since 1948 at which the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon was not represented. There had already begun the quarrel between that party and the International which was two years later to result in the expulsion of most of the LSSP from the International.³⁹

One of the decisions of the Sixth Congress that was not published at the time was to move the headquarters of the International. Until 1960 it was located in Paris, but it was concluded that because of the return of Charles de Gaulle to power it was no longer advisable to keep the headquarters there, since the International Secretariat had been particularly active in support of the Algerian revolution.

In 1960 the headquarters was moved to Amsterdam, where it was thought that the Trotskyists would be freer to operate and where they would be nearer the European headquarters of the Algerian revolution, which was in Cologne. However, soon after moving there Michel Pablo was arrested by the Dutch police for his work against the Algerian War and was sentenced to two years in jail, which he served.

After Pablo's arrest it was decided to move the International Secretariat to Rome. The reason for this was that, of the three members of the Bureau of the Secretariat—Pierre

Frank, Ernest Mandel, and Livio Maitan—Maitan was at that time the only one who could devote full-time to the work of the IS. Pablo opposed this decision.⁴⁰

The International Committee from 1953 to 1963

The other faction of International Trotskyism, the International Committee, did not hold full-fledged congresses such as those of the Pabloite group. Pierre Frank has noted that it "really functioned not as a centralized organization but as a faction with loose ties among its members. According to information supplied by comrades who took part in the International Committee, there were few international meetings of the committee, political positions often being formulated, in the form of documents from national sections after exchanges of views between the committee's meetings."⁴¹

However, from time to time there were limited meetings of representatives of the parties and groups associated with the International Committee. For example, one such meeting took place in Paris in November 1955. It adopted resolutions on the so-called Parity Commission between the Pabloites and the IC, and on "Solidarity with the Algerian Struggle for National Liberation."⁴²

The nearest thing to a worldwide meeting of the International Committee was a World Conference which met in Leeds in 1958. The leading role was apparently taken by the delegates of the SWP of the United States, whose principal resolution was adopted at the meeting. The Latin American delegates to the conference submitted several documents which were critical of the attitude of the SWP within the International Committee, particularly its allegedly "federal" concept of the nature of the Fourth International, and particularly of the International Committee and of overtures which SWP leaders had made for reunification with the International Secretariat. However, the resolutions submitted by the Latin Americans

were not formally considered by the conference.⁴³

One development within the International Committee which was to have considerable future impact on the evolution of International Trotskyism was the formation of a Latin American organization within its ranks. This resulted from a meeting in October 1954 which set up the Comité Latinoamericana del Trotskismo Ortodoxo (CLA) consisting of Nahuel Moreno from the Argentine POR-Palabra Obrera, Humberto Valenzuela of the Chilean POR, and Hernández from the Peruvian POR.

The CLA organized in March 1957 what it called the First Conference of Latin American Orthodox Trotskyism, which established the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism (SLATO), which continued to exist until December 1964. Starting in 1957, SLATO issued a more or less regular publication, *Estrategia*, edited by Nahuel Moreno and appearing in Buenos Aires. Although some other groups were nominally affiliated with SLATO, its major affiliates continued to be those of Argentina, Chile, and Peru.⁴⁴

In April 1961 SLATO held its second meeting, in Buenos Aires, where it paid particular attention to the phenomenon of Castroism in Latin America. It also adopted resolutions requesting the International Committee to publish all documents on the subject of Castroism and the Cuban Revolution which had been adopted by the member groups of the IC, and calling for a general discussion of the Castroite phenomenon within the ranks of the International Committee.⁴⁵

The position of SLATO was later summed up thus: "SLATO decidedly oriented itself to the perspective that the Cuban Revolution had provoked a decisive change in the relations of forces between imperialism and the masses, in favor of the latter, with a leading role for the agrarian revolution and the armed struggle . . . and that a petty bourgeois revolutionary nationalist movement on continental dimensions, Castroism, had ap-

peared. A correct line for the construction of Trotskyist revolutionary parties must take into account these new phenomena, in particular, guerrilla war, incorporating them in the traditional program of Trotskyism."⁴⁶

After first categorizing the Cuban regime as a workers' state "in transition," SLATO soon came to regard it as a "bureaucratic workers state." As a counterpart to this definition SLATO advocated a "political revolution" in Cuba as in other "workers states."⁴⁷

SLATO formed the core of what in the 1970s and 1980s was to be the "Morenoist" tendency in International Trotskyism.

Pierre Frank has noted concerning relations between the IC and the IS that "beginning in 1956, the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the Sino-Soviet dispute brought the positions of the two groups closer on the question of the crisis of Stalinism. Moreover, on the problems of the colonial revolution members and sympathizers of the International Committee, especially those in North America and Latin America, underwent an experience with the Cuban revolution that was in many respects similar to the Fourth International's experience with the Algerian revolution."⁴⁸

From time to time the International Committee issued general statements. One of the most significant of these was the "Manifesto of the International Committee of the Fourth International (Trotskyist), on the Hungarian Revolution," published in November 1956. It proclaimed that "the Hungarian people, arms in hand, have revolted against the native Stalinist bureaucracy and its Russian overlords. In the course of their heroic struggle, they have established workers councils in several important industrial towns." The statement went on to argue that "to destroy Stalinist bureaucratic oppression and counter-revolution, the Hungarian workers council (or soviet) method of organization, which as in Russia in '17, forms the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

This document appealed to the members

of the Communist parties to use the betrayal of the workers by their parties in the Hungarian situation to get rid of their Stalinist leaders. It also appealed to the Soviet Armed Forces, calling upon them to "remember the revolutionary traditions of the Red Army founded by Leon Trotsky. Solidarize yourselves immediately with the gallant Hungarian fighters for socialist freedom organized in their soviets."⁴⁹

Early Moves Toward Reunification

The split in the Fourth International had hardly been consummated when steps began to be taken which, in the eyes of some of the people involved, were designed to try to reestablish the unity of the international Trotskyist movement. A leading role in this process was taken by the Lanka Sama Samaja of Ceylon which, although staying in the Fourth International of the Pabloites, shared many of the views of the rival group organized in the International Committee.

Leslie Goonewardene of the LSSP had meetings with Gerry Healy, apparently soon after the Fourth World Congress of the Pabloites. Out of this discussion came the decision to establish a "Parity Commission" of the two groups. Fred Feldman has noted that "to Goonewardene, this was a step toward reunification, but for Healy, the parity commission was intended to win over the Ceylonese and to place the onus . . . for the continuation of the split on Pablo."⁵⁰

This Parity Commission soon became a bone of contention within the International Committee. Although they had gone along with its establishment, the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party (often referred to in the relevant documents as "the New Zealand section") quickly came to the conclusion that the Parity Commission was a bad idea. After some exchange of correspondence they succeeded in convincing Gerry Healy of the same point of view. The French affiliate of the International Committee had been opposed to the commission from the beginning.

The only leading figure in the International Committee who remained convinced that the exchange of documents between the Pabloites and the International Committee through the vehicle of a Parity Commission was the best possible way of getting the IC points of view presented to the leaders of the possibly sympathetic groups which remained in the Pabloite organization—particularly the Ceylonese—was P'eng Shu-tse, the exiled leader of the Chinese Trotskyists. He had closer contacts with the LSSP than did his European and U.S. colleagues. P'eng continued to fight for the maintenance of the Parity Commission.

After about a year and a half of discussion, a meeting of the International Committee in Paris on November 7-8, 1955, decided to withdraw from the Parity Commission. The decision was taken by a vote of five to one, with the French, British, Swiss, German, and Dutch sections voting in favor of withdrawal and only the Chinese delegate opposing the idea.⁵¹ Further efforts of P'eng Shu-tse to change his colleagues' minds were to no avail.⁵²

In 1957 there were further discussions looking to the possible reunion of the two factions of International Trotskyism. Pierre Frank has noted, in discussing the International Secretariat's Fifth World Congress, that "in the course of preparing for the congress, an attempt at rapprochement with the International Committee was made, with a view to reunification. . . ." He added that "this attempt at rapprochement failed, mainly because distrust on the organizational level persisted."⁵³ Some controversy continued on whether the British Section of the IC or the Socialist Workers Party was more responsible for the failure of this attempt at reunification.⁵⁴

The 1962-63 Parity Commission and Its Results

The last attempt to try to reunite the Fourth International of the Pablo followers and the International Committee, which was par-

tially successful, began in February 1962. In that month the National Committee of the Socialist Labor League, the British affiliate of the International Committee headed by Gerry Healy, passed a motion calling for

The IC to approach the IS with a view to the setting up of a sub-committee consisting of three members from the International Committee and the International Secretariat. The purpose of this committee would be to arrange an exchange of internal material on international problems among all the sections affiliated to both the sections. It is to be hoped that such a step would encourage discussion, and the sub-committee could arrange for the regular publication of an international bulletin dealing with this. Eventually, the sub-committee would prepare a summary report on the area of agreement and differences between the two bodies.

This resolution was unanimously accepted by the IC and agreed to by the International Secretariat. The first meeting of the so-called Parity Committee took place on September 2, 1962.⁵⁵ There it was agreed to invite all national sections of both organizations to participate and to include the Posadas group, which had also broken away from the International Secretariat. It agreed to hold meetings every month and to organize joint activities particularly around the question of getting the Soviet leaders to "rehabilitate" Trotsky, and the issue of the Angolan revolution then in progress. The meeting also urged the end of all factional activity within both groups.

In addition, the September 2, 1962, Parity Committee meeting had before it two sets of proposals, from the IC and the IS. The former was more or less what was adopted by the meeting with the addition of a proviso that "the Parity Committee agrees to work for the calling of a preliminary international congress during the summer of 1964. The purpose of this congress would be to establish the political policies and the relationship of forces between the various tenden-

cies so that discussion can proceed towards a definitive solution of the international crisis."

The International Secretariat resolution was one passed by the Twenty-third Plenum of its International Executive Committee, which had taken place a few days before. The resolution expressed "its strong belief that the political and organizational conditions exist for a successful reunification. It appeals to all the Trotskyists in order that they be equal to their responsibilities and help the world movement to progress with reunified forces in the historical period of world revolution in march which will see in the coming years the progressive integration of our cadres in the mass revolutionary forces in all the continents."⁵⁶

Several subsequent meetings of the Parity Committee were held. It was clear from the start that different elements involved in the Parity Committee exercise had different objectives. The majority leadership in the *International Secretariat*—headed particularly by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank, and Livio Maitan—were anxious to reunite as much of the world Trotskyist movement as soon as possible. One minority of the *International Secretariat* which was against reunification had already broken away from the IS under the leadership of J. Posadas before the Parity Committee was even established. A second element of the IS, headed by Michel Pablo, who was by that time in the employ of the new Algerian government of Ben Bella, had its reservations about the unity drive and formed its own tendency within the *International Secretariat*.

There were also differences of opinion and objectives within the *International Committee*. These apparently became clear at a meeting of the IC in January 1963. On the one hand, the U.S. Socialist Workers Party shared the IS majority's objective of rapid reunification of the world movement, bringing together as many elements as were willing to participate. On the other hand, a group composed principally of the British and

French sections of the *International Committee* felt that the first thing necessary was a thorough discussion of the causes of the original split and a repudiation of "Pabloism" which they felt had been responsible. Possible reunification could take place only after an extensive period of discussion.

These different points of view proved irreconcilable, at least on the side of the *International Committee*. As a consequence, there was a *conference of the pronunification elements of the IC in March 1963*—which Joseph Hansen claimed included not only the SWP but also the Argentine, Austrian, Canadian, Chilean, Chinese, and Japanese sections—and it agreed to join with the *International Secretariat's* sections in mounting the "Reunification Congress," which took place in June 1963.⁵⁷

The Posadas Schism in the International Secretariat

The so-called Reunification Congress only reunified part of the international Trotskyist movement. There were important elements from both the *International Secretariat* forces and those of the *International Committee* which did not participate in this process. Before looking at the Reunification Congress itself, it is necessary to look at those who refused to take part in it.

During the post-World War II period the number of Trotskyist groups in Latin America had expanded considerably. When the split in the Fourth International took place in 1953 the majority of these stayed with the *International Secretariat*—the major exceptions being the Argentine group led by Nahuel Moreno, a major part of the Chilean movement, and part of the Bolivian POR.

Sometime after the Fourth International split there had been organized within the *International Secretariat* the Latin American Bureau of the Fourth International. It was headed by one of the more curious figures in the history of International Trotskyism, Homero Cristali, who used and was

generally known by the party name J. Posadas. He was a one-time professional soccer player who had some organizing ability and, as it turned out, a somewhat exaggerated idea of his own capacity as a Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist theorist.

Pierre Frank has traced the emergence of Posadas as a factional leader within the International Secretariat to the disillusionment of a number of people within the Trotskyist ranks with the possibility of successful revolution in the highly industrialized states, and their growing conviction that the hope of world revolution lay almost entirely in the colonial and semicolonial countries. Among those who tended to have this point of view were Pablo and Posadas. Sometime in 1959 "they united against the 'Europeans' and the members of the international leadership who did not want to abandon political activity within the European mass movement. . . ."⁵⁸

Shortly afterward Pablo and a Dutch Trotskyist leader, Sal Santen, were arrested in the Netherlands in connection with their agitation on behalf of the Algerian revolution, leaving Posadas as more or less the leader of the "anti-Europeans." He mounted a major effort on the basis of his influence among the Latin American Trotskyists to win a majority at the World Congress of the International Secretariat early in 1961. He did not succeed; in addition, a number of those at the congress who were close to Pablo dissociated themselves from Posadas because of his "extreme" behavior.⁵⁹ Subsequently, Posadas broke violently with Pablo over differing attitudes toward the Sino-Soviet dispute, among other issues.⁶⁰

Finally, in April 1962 Posadas and his followers organized what they called an Extraordinary Conference of the Fourth International "under the direction of the Latin American Bureau." It was held somewhere in Latin America (the internal evidence of some of the documents adopted there indicating that it probably met in Uruguay). According to Posadas, it lasted nine days.⁶¹

A communiqué issued by this meeting announced that "there has been named a new Provisional International Executive Committee and a new International Secretariat, to take the place of the former ones, which have become paralyzed and disintegrated. It has been decided to reconstruct the sections of the IV International in Europe, drawing political and organizational conclusions from the capitulation of the leadership of Germain in the Belgian Section, of Pierre Frank in the French Section, of Livio Maitan in the Italian Section. . . . These Parties have nothing to do with the IV International and Trotskyism. . . ."⁶²

Posadas's new International Secretariat claimed that "the majority of the International" had been represented at this conference, although no specific figures were given. It also announced that the Extraordinary Conference had decided "to declare outside of the International Mr. Maitan, Frank, Pablo and the others, in the face of their clear political, ideological, organizational surrender and their abandonment of the resolutions of the congresses since 1938."⁶³

The official documents of this "Extraordinary Conference" provided some indication of the organizational, personal, and ideological bases of the Posadas group's decision to split and in effect to form their own Fourth International. In a "Call of the Extraordinary Conference of April 1962 to the Bolshevik Militants and Cadres of the International in Europe, Asia and Africa," they charged that at the Sixth Congress it had been decided that a majority of the International Secretariat should be "colonial," but "the conserved, capitulating and liquidationist sector of E. Germain, Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Michel Pablo, Sal Santen, George and René . . . brutally violated" that decision. Furthermore, they "have paralyzed the leadership of the International." Although the Latin American delegations had succeeded at the Sixth Congress in getting acceptance of "the strategy of applying the essential forces of

the World Party in the arena of the colonial revolution," and the Sixth Congress had provided for an IEC and is to carry out such a policy, "during a year the capitulating sector did nothing serious to establish the colonial majority, even passing a resolution to leave the leadership as it was, as a result of which the members from the colonial countries remained in the minority."⁶⁴

Clearly, too, Posadas and his colleagues felt that their talents and capacities had not been adequately recognized by "the Europeans." A special resolution concerning Pablo, for instance, accused him of calling the movement in Latin America in an open letter a "troupe" and of accusing the Latin American leaders of being "ignorant." This same resolution said that "taking as the center of his attacks Comrade Luis, the letter turns its depreciating attitude however, on the whole Latin American movement. The letter reveals the disdain of the revolutionary proletariat on the part of the petty bourgeois intellectuals who have been incapable of constructing Bolshevik cadres or organizations."⁶⁵ ["Comrade Luis" was used to designate Posadas in the official documents of the Extraordinary Conference.]

Finally, the documents of this meeting clearly spell out the peculiar "theoretical" or "ideological" line which Posadas had adopted and which may well go far to explain whatever "disdain" he and his associates were held in by "the Europeans." This line is alluded to in several of the documents of the meeting but nowhere more clearly than in Posadas's closing speech. He said there that

We repeat, emphasize with all the historic force and the decision of our conscience, of our confidence, and at our command that atomic war is inevitable. It will destroy perhaps half of humanity, it is going to destroy immense human riches. It is very possible. The atomic war is going to provoke a true inferno on earth. But it will not impede communism. Communism is an achieved necessity, not because of the

material goods produced, but because it is in the consciousness of human beings. When humanity reacts and works in a Communist form as it is working, there is no atomic bomb capable of turning back that which human consciousness has acquired and learned. . . .⁶⁶

History, in its violent, spasmodic form, is demonstrating that little time remains for capitalism. Little time. We can say in a completely conscientious and certain way that if the Workers States fulfill their historical duty of aiding the colonial revolutions, capitalism doesn't have ten years of life. This is an audacious declaration but it is totally logical. Capitalism hasn't ten years of life. If the Workers States launch support of the colonial revolution with all their forces, capitalism has not five years of life, and the atomic war will last a very short time.⁶⁷

The Extraordinary Conference instructed its new Provisional IEC and International Secretariat to prepare for a full-fledged world congress in the near future. To that end it was instructed to organize new parties in a number of European countries. By July 1962 it was claimed that new sections affiliated with the Provisional International Executive Committee had been established in Italy, France, Belgium, and Spain.⁶⁸

The Defections of the Healy-Lambert Groups

On the side of the International Committee the British and French sections refused to participate in the Reunification Congress and instead continued the existence of the International Committee. The positions supported by the Socialist Labor League led by Gerry Healy and the Organization Communiste Internationaliste headed by Pierre Lambert, and perhaps the reasons for their actions, by no means entirely coincided. They were united, however, in their opposition to merging with the "Pabloites."

There had been disagreements from time

to time between the Healy group and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States since the earliest days of the International Committee, but it was not until the beginning of serious consultations concerning the possibility of reuniting the IC and the IS that these divergences brought a parting of the ways between the two groups. The principal programmatic-ideological question over which the SLL and SWP quarreled was that of the Cuban Revolution. The Socialist Workers Party, of course, had come some time earlier to the conclusion that the Castro regime was by then a workers' state. The British did not agree. A polemic on the issue ensued between Joseph Hansen of the SWP and the leadership of the SLL.

Hansen wrote a long article entitled "Cuba—The Acid Test: A Reply to the Ultra Left Sectarians," dated November 20, 1962. Although the article extended over fifty pages, its thesis may be summed up in terms of the old story to the effect that if an animal looks like a dog, barks like a dog, wags its tail like a dog, and says it is a dog, it is probably a dog. Hansen maintained that if the Castro regime had the characteristics which the Trotskyist movement over more than a quarter of a century had laid down as those of a workers' state, it must be a workers' state. These characteristics were a nationalized economy and the substitution of the plan for the market as the guiding force in the economy.

After a considerable interval the Socialist Labor League's National Committee adopted a document on March 23, 1963, entitled "Opportunism and Empiricism." This long essay was a more or less direct reply to the piece by Hansen. The British accused Hansen and the SWP leadership generally of the mistake of substituting the philosophical approach of empiricism (in its peculiar American manifestation of pragmatism) for the dialectical materialism of Marx. Attacking Hansen for his insistence that "the facts" about the Castro regime indicated that it had become a workers' state, the SLL leadership argued that mere

"facts" without the proper philosophical framework within which to organize their meaning were useless. Hansen and the other SWP leaders had abandoned the philosophical framework of dialectical materialism, as refined over the preceding thirty-five years by the Trotskyist movement. They therefore had misinterpreted the "facts" of the Cuban situation.

Furthermore, this attitude of the SWP leaders meant, according to the SLL, that Hansen and the others were falling into the same trap of "Pabloism" which had caused the 1953 split in the first place. Not only was their position similar at that moment to the position of the IS leaders with regard to the Algerian Revolution, which Pablo and others were arguing was evolving into a workers' state, but the problem was more profound. The SWP leaders had come around to accepting what they had rejected ten years earlier, the anti-Trotskyist notion that the revolution could be brought about in some other way than through the aegis of the revolutionary vanguard party. This all added up to capitulation to the Stalinists.⁶⁹

Other issues inevitably entered into the controversy. On the one hand, the SLL leaders accused the SWP of working behind the backs of the British both in dealing with the International Secretariat and with elements of the International Committee that agreed with quick unification with the "Pabloites." On the other hand, the SWP leaders insisted that Healy was disloyal in his dealings with opposition groups within the Socialist Workers Party which favored the SLL position and were against "reunification."⁷⁰

The position of the leadership of the French Section of the International Committee was rather different from that of the SLL. They did not agree with the Healyite argument that the Castro regime was still "capitalist," arguing rather that it was a workers' and peasants' government.

On the other hand, the Lambertists had their own good reasons for not wanting unity with the International Secretariat and therefore siding with Healy and the SLL. The

first move in the 1952-53 split had been the intervention of the International Secretariat in the internal affairs of the French PCI, seeking to convert a majority there into a minority. The Lambertists were still the largest Trotskyist group in France, but in a reunified International it would in all likelihood be Pierre Frank, leader of the other major group, who would figure in the top leadership of the Fourth International. Also, without specific repudiation of the entrism *sui generis* notion, the Lambertists certainly had reservations about going back to the International which had tried to force them to follow such a policy.

The upshot of this situation was that the British Socialist Labor League and the Lambert group in France did not participate in the Reunification Congress of June 1963. Instead, a congress of the International Committee met from September 9-13, 1963, and voted to keep the organization in existence. However, it also adopted a resolution calling for a "world congress of the forces of the IC and the IS . . . during the autumn of 1964" and for a joint committee to prepare such a congress. That committee should "prepare a joint resolution on world perspectives to be submitted to all sections of both groups."⁷¹ Healy communicated this resolution, in the name of the International Committee to the United Secretariat, but nothing came of the idea.

The Congress of Reunification

The majority faction of the International Secretariat and the prounification part of the International Committee each held a congress which discussed the problems and possibilities of unity of the Trotskyist movement. Both meetings approved documents which subsequently were to be adopted by the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International held in June 1963.

The Reunification Congress adopted the resolutions which had been previously approved. However, the faction of the Interna-

tional Secretariat led by Michel Pablo presented a minority resolution for discussion. Representatives of his tendency were elected as a minority in the new International Executive Committee chosen by the meeting.

A full day of the congress was devoted to discussion of the Algerian revolution, concerning which Pablo presented a report. Pierre Frank has said that "the congress was unanimous in seeing important possibilities for the development of the Algerian revolution towards a socialist revolution, as had happened in Cuba, and decided to do its utmost to mobilize the International and its sections in support of the Algerian revolution."⁷²

The major document adopted by the Reunification Congress was entitled "Dynamics of World Revolution Today." This seventeen-page document presented the basic orientation of the majority element in International Trotskyism in 1963.

The statement started by noting that "the classical schema of world revolution assumed that the victory of socialism would occur first in the most industrially developed countries, setting an example for the less developed." However, the resolution noted that "the revolution followed a more devious path than even its greatest theoreticians had expected. . . ." As a consequence, "All the victorious revolutions after 1917, including the establishment of workers' states through revolutionary upheavals in Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, and Cuba, thus took place in relatively backward countries, while the possibility of early revolutionary victory in the imperialist countries was postponed."⁷³

Following this general line of thought, the resolution claimed that "it is important to recognize that the three main forces of world revolution—the colonial revolution, the political revolution in the degenerated or deformed workers' states, and the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries—form a dialectical unity. Each force influ-

ences the others and receives in return powerful impulses or brakes on its own development."⁷⁴

After reviewing each of these aspects of the world revolution, the resolution argued that

The most probable variant in the next few years is, therefore, the following: the colonial revolution will continue, involving new countries and deepening its social character as more workers' states appear. It will not lead directly to the overthrow of capitalism in the imperialist centers but it will play a powerful role in building a new world revolutionary leadership as is already clear from the emergence of Castroist currents. The pressure of the masses in the workers' states will continue, with a tendency toward increasing mass action and the possible beginning of political revolution in several workers' states. Both these developments will favorably influence the resurgence of mass militancy among the proletariat in the imperialist countries, reinforcing a tendency stemming directly from the socioeconomic mechanism of advanced capitalism and the slowing down of its rate of expansion.⁷⁵

In its discussion of the basic issue which had split the Fourth International a decade earlier, entrism *sui generis*, this basic document of the Reunification Congress would seem to have been closer to the "Pabloite" position of 1952-53 than to that of Pablo's opponents, although it was somewhat less explicit than Pablo had been. This discussion started with the claim that the Fourth International "in its programmatic declarations and in its participation in the class struggle on a world-wide scale . . . has proved itself to be the legitimate heir and continuator of the great tradition of revolutionary Marxism. Events have proved it right on many points that even its antagonists have had to borrow from its arsenal,

though in a partial, one-sided or distorted way."⁷⁶

Admitting that the FI and its sections remained relatively small, the resolution asserted that "the world Trotskyist movement has given much consideration to the problem of setting out with small forces to win the working class and organize it into a party capable of challenging the rule of the capitalist class. The over-all principle on which it has proceeded on the organizational level is . . . that a revolutionist must not permit himself to be separated from his class under any circumstances. . . . They belong to the big organizations of the masses whether they be nationalistic, cultural or political in character. Insofar as possible, they advance the ideas and the program of Trotskyism among the members of these organizations and seek to recruit from them."⁷⁷

It follows that "they have no choice but to practice 'entryism'; that is, to participate as an integrated component in the internal life of the mass movement. . . . The purpose of 'entryism' is not to construct a 'pressure group,' as some critics have charged, but to build a mass revolutionary Marxist party in the real conditions that must be faced in a number of countries. . . . for a certain stage of work, no practical alternative remains open. Owing to national peculiarities, the tactic has many variants. It must be applied with great flexibility and without dogmatism of any kind. The norm for those engaging in it is to maintain a sector of open public work, including their own Trotskyist publication."⁷⁸

However, the document also contained a gesture in the direction of the "anti-Pablo" position of the International Committee. It said that "the building of an alternative leadership of the working class; i.e., of new revolutionary mass parties, remains the central task of our epoch. The problem is not that of repeating over and over again this elementary truth, but of explaining concretely how it is to be done. In fact, the building of revo-

lutionary mass parties combines three concrete processes: the process of defending and constantly enriching the Marxist revolutionary program; of building, educating and hardening a revolutionary Marxist cadre; and of winning *mass influence* for this cadre. These three processes are dialectically intertwined. . . ."⁷⁹

The resolution also reflected the close association elements of the United Secretariat either had or hoped to develop with the Algerian and Cuban revolutionary regimes. Noting that "in previous decades" failure to develop a revolutionary party before the outbreak of revolution "would signify certain defeat for the revolution," it went on to say that "because of a series of new factors, however, this is no longer necessarily the case. The example of the Soviet Union, the existence of workers' states from whom material aid can be obtained, and the relative weakening of world capitalism, have made it possible for revolutions in some instances to achieve partial successes . . . and even to go as far as the establishment of a workers state. Revolutionary Marxists in such countries face extremely difficult questions," but "no choice is open to them in such situations but to participate completely and wholeheartedly in the revolution and to build the party in the very process of the revolution itself."

Finally, the resolution reiterated that "only an International based on democratic centralism, permitting different tendencies to confront each other democratically while uniting them in action, can allow experiences from all corners of the world to become properly weighed and translated into revolutionary tasks on a world scale. . . . The necessity to build a strong, democratically centralized International is underscored all the more by the present dialectical relationship between the three main sectors of the world revolution. . . ." Presumably the conclusive argument on the issue was "that Fidel Castro, as a result of his own experience in a living revolution, today stresses the de-

cisive importance of building Marxist-Leninist parties in all countries."⁸⁰

The Latin American parties of the International Committee, which had been grouped together in the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism, did not immediately join the United Secretariat. However, "once the reunification was consummated, our tendency, SLATO, characterized it as positive, gave it critical support and began a process of discussions and negotiations. . . . Only in December 1964, when the discussions and negotiations which we had carried on for more than a year culminated, our tendency, SLATO, headed by Palabra Obrera, transformed its critical support of reunification into formal entry into the Fourth International headed by the United Secretariat."⁸¹

Conclusion

During the early 1950s the Fourth International suffered a major split, dividing it into two organizationally distinct groups. The major policy issue at the heart of this schism was the old question of "entrism" which had been a cause of controversy even when Leon Trotsky was still alive, but an entrism of a rather different type, which in most European and many Asiatic countries would have meant the virtual disappearance of any open Trotskyist organization. This policy was posited on a new perspective of a revolutionary process of "several centuries" during which leadership would be in the hands of Stalinist parties and Stalinist-type bureaucracies in countries in which the revolution triumphed—leaving the Trotskyists, supposedly, no alternative but to work for their ideas within those parties and regimes. Undoubtedly organizational and personal issues also played important parts in the 1952-53 split in the Fourth International.

A decade later, through the device of suspending more or less indefinitely any further discussion of the causes of the split and including elements from the positions of both

factions in a new position statement, unity of major elements of both sides was achieved. However, important parts of both international factions stayed out of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, so that "reunification" in fact resulted in there being three international factions instead of two. From the early 1960s, therefore, it becomes necessary to trace the history of the Fourth International in terms of those factions, of schismatic groups which emerged from them, and still other claimants to the tradition of Leon Trotsky's original Fourth International which emerged without any clear connection with the three "Fourth Internationals" which existed after June 1963.

French Trotskyism Before World War II

France was the West European country with which Leon Trotsky had been most closely associated before the Russian Revolution and in the years immediately after it. He had lived there in exile before 1917, and within the Communist International he had taken a particular interest in the fortunes and progress of the French Communist Party, which was particularly faction-ridden during the 1920s.

This long-lasting concern forms the background for his efforts to build up a strong Communist Opposition movement in France once he was exiled from the Soviet Union by Stalin. A priori, the ground looked particularly fertile for such a movement there because of the number and variety of oppositionists who were already present. But as Trotsky soon discovered, factionalism was as prolific among the Opposition as it had been in the Communist Party itself. The task of forming a viable French section of the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, to which he devoted a great deal of energy and attention between 1929 and 1940, proved to be a very difficult one.

Antecedents of Left Opposition in France

As was the case in many, if not most, of the Communist parties, that of France was characterized by intense factionalism during its early years. A contributing factor to the internal conflicts of the French Communist Party was the fact that the prewar Socialist Party (known often as the SFIO—the French Section of the Workers International) had been one of few such organizations in which the majority had decided to accept the Comintern's Twenty-one Condi-

tions and to affiliate with the Communist International. Inevitably it included within its ranks more than the usual proportion of people who, although attracted by the Bolshevik Revolution and by the very radical rhetoric of the early Comintern, were in no real sense Bolsheviks.

The "sorting out" of the various currents began even before the SFIO assumed the name Communist Party and officially joined the Communist International. It continued until after the triumph of Stalin in the Soviet party and the CP, and was closely watched by the Soviet party and the Comintern, both of which actively interfered in the feuding within the French party.

As early as 1922 Jules Humbert-Droz, the member of the Secretariat of the Communist International officially charged with oversight of the parties of Latin Europe (and Latin America), was busy on the spot, trying to support those whom the Comintern considered real Bolsheviks and oppose those whom it felt were misfits in the French party. The editor of a volume of Humbert-Droz's papers covering his work in Latin Europe and America for the Comintern noted that in 1922 the French CP was characterized "by violent factional struggles among the left grouped around Souvarine and Treint, the center left with the secretary general Frossard and Cachin, the center right of Renoult and the right (Verfeuil, Lafont, etc.) and the 'ultralefts.' That constellation was further complicated with the entry upon the scene of the revolutionary syndicalists and anarchists in the Party and the dispute over the question of relations between the PCF and the CGTU, detached from the CCT and dominated by the revolutionary syndicalists."¹

In 1922 the Comintern favored an alliance of the left and the center-left, and the expulsion of the right from the party, and this was what Humbert-Droz tried to bring about. However, this was made very difficult by bitter quarrels between the leaders of the left and center-left.²

The internal situation in the French party was further complicated not only by the intervention of the Comintern but by that of the Soviet party as well. Humbert-Droz, in the second volume of his memoirs, noted that "parallel to the apparatus of the Communist International, which formally maintained contact with the member parties, the Political Bureau of the Soviet Communist Party had its own rapporteurs on the various sections of the International. Thus Trotsky, specialist in French questions, received copies of my reports to Zinoviev." Humbert-Droz added that "later Stalin, who knew nothing of the international movement, organized a special section in his own secretariat to follow the affairs of the Comintern. He sent to the parties delegates who did not send their reports to the ECCI. The secretariat of Stalin thus became the Russian duplicate of the ECCI, with powers naturally superior, depending directly on the chief and receiving his instructions."³

As a consequence of the internal factionalism in the French party and in some instances of action by the Comintern, a number of leaders of the Left had been expelled from the French party or had left it voluntarily during the years preceding Trotsky's exile to Turkey. The first of these was Boris Souvarine, who had been editor of the "internal bulletin" of the party and its delegate to the Comintern. He was a "premature Trotskyist," his role being somewhat similar to that of Max Eastman in the United States.

Jules Humbert-Droz has indicated the reason for Souvarine's fall from Communist leadership. Commenting on the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in the spring of 1924, after Lenin's death, in which there was widespread rumor-mongering about the struggle against Trotsky which was already in full swing within the Soviet Party, he said that "contrary to what it had done with the Workers Opposition, the International did not publish the documents of the Trotskyist opposition and the delegates were informed

only by the most contradictory rumors which circulated in the corridors of the congress. Only Souvarine had published in France the documents of Trotsky, which brought against him violent attacks and finally exclusion from the International."⁴

Humbert-Droz noted that at the Fifth Congress Albert Treint, then closely allied to Zinoviev, chairman of the Comintern and at that time bitterly opposed to Trotsky, carried the battle against Souvarine. The result was that in the plenum of the ECCI held right after the congress, Souvarine was "excluded . . . from the ranks of the Communist International, against only the votes of the Italian Communist Party, since Togliatti and Bordiga had taken up his defense."⁵

In the process of carrying out the so-called "bolshevization" of the French Communist Party decreed by Zinoviev as head of the Comintern during the period in which he was allied with Stalin (1924-1926), Albert Treint purged the party of anyone suspected of sympathy for Trotsky. One of the most important of these was Alfred Rosmer, a one-time syndicalist who had become head of the left wing of the labor confederation, the CGT, during the First World War. He had participated in the Zimmerwald conference and was a member of the Communist Party from 1920 until he was expelled in 1924. He served as a member of the ECCI in 1920-21.⁶

Albert Treint spent eighteen months in Moscow in 1926-27. It was after that that he expressed his support for the United Opposition and was himself expelled from the French Communist Party in 1927. Thereafter he participated in several Communist opposition groups, including L'Unité Leniniste and the Comité de Redressement Communiste.⁷

Still other leftists were thrown out of the French Communist Party after the departure of Albert Treint. One of the most important of these was Pierre Naville, expelled in 1928, who thereafter revived a Communist literary-political journal *Clarté*, changing its name to *La Lutte de Classes*.⁸

Another group of leftists expelled from the Communist Party founded the journal *Contre le Courant*, which first appeared in November 1927. It received some financial aid from the Russian Opposition through the Soviet leader Y. Piatakov. Among the most important figures in this group were Maurice and Magdeleine Paz.⁹

Trotsky's and the French Left Opposition

Isaac Deutscher has noted that "on the day he arrived" in Turkey Trotsky "sent out messages to friends and well-wishers in western Europe, especially in France. Their response was immediate."¹⁰ Among those replying were Alfred and Marguerite Rosmer, Boris Souvarine, and Maurice and Magdeleine Paz. It was the Rosmers and Pazes who put Trotsky in contact with various Western newspapers, including the *New York Times* and the *Daily Express* of London, which immediately accepted (for payment) articles from him on what was going on in the Soviet Union and about why and how he had been expelled. These two couples also came to visit him in Turkey.¹¹ Maurice Paz also made a loan to Trotsky of 20,000 French francs to tide him over his first financial difficulties, a loan which, according to Isaac Deutscher, Trotsky repaid within a year.¹²

Some supporters whom Trotsky had never previously met also arrived to establish contact with him. One of those who was for many years to play a major role in the French Trotskyist movement was Raymond Molinier. Jean van Heijenoort recounted that "at the end of March 1929, a young stranger arrived from Paris. On April 20 Trotsky wrote to Paz: 'Personally, Raymond Molinier is one of the most obliging, practical and energetic men that one can imagine. He has found a place for me to live, discussed the conditions with the landlady, and so on. He is quite ready to stay with us for a few months, with his wife.' Molinier

had indeed won Trotsky's esteem. A few months later Trotsky told a visitor, 'Raymond Molinier is the prefiguration of the future communist revolution.' Molinier went back to Paris in May, but his wife, Jeanne, whose maiden name was Martin des Pallières, stayed on for a while in Prinkipo.¹³

Trotsky set about immediately trying to weld those French well-wishers and presumed supporters into a viable organization. However, several of those upon whom Trotsky had undoubtedly most counted proved to be an almost immediate disappointment.

One of the first defectors was Boris Souvarine. Isaac Deutscher has noted that Trotsky had "expected him to be the Opposition's most articulate French mouthpiece." However, "To his surprise Souvarine displayed intolerable airs and pretensions. He asked Trotsky to make no public statements without 'previous agreements with the French Opposition,' that is with himself. Trotsky, anxious to avoid dissension, answered that he would make no pronouncement on French issues, but that so far he had spoken in public on Soviet (and Chinese) affairs only, on which surely he was entitled to have his say without asking for a French *placet*. Souvarine replied with an immense epistle, running to over 130 pages packed with paradoxes, *bon mots*, odds and ends of shrewd observation and analysis, but also with incredibly muddled arguments, all advanced in a tone of venomous hostility which made a breach inevitable."¹⁴ Trotsky's reply to this tirade was "I do not see anything left of the ties that united us a few years ago. . . . What guides you and suggests your paradoxes to you is the pen of a disgruntled and frustrated journalist. . . ."¹⁵

The Pazes proved to be equally disappointing. Isaac Deutscher has noted that when the Pazes visited him early in 1929 Trotsky "urged them to unite their circle with the other groups, to transform *Contre le Courant* into a 'great and aggressive'

weekly speaking with the voice of the Opposition, and to launch an ambitious recruiting campaign." According to Deutscher, "he worked out with them the plan of the campaign and promised his own close cooperation. They accepted his suggestions though not without reservations."

However, upon their return to Paris Maurice and Magdeleine Paz had second thoughts about the possibility of carrying out the plans agreed upon. Furthermore, "above all, they protested against his 'attempt to impose Rosmer's leadership,' and they spoke disparagingly of the young Trotskyists spoiling for a fight as a bunch of simpletons and ignoramuses." Deutscher noted that "nothing could be more calculated to convince Trotsky that the Pazes had in them little or nothing of the professional revolutionaries whom he was seeking to gather."¹⁶ As a matter of fact, *Contre le Courant* expired before the end of 1929.¹⁷

A third potential supporter whom Trotsky failed to win at that point to the French Opposition which he was trying to nurse into existence was Albert Treint. Trotsky's own followers had deep resentment against Treint who, as an associate of Zinoviev, had been principally responsible for their expulsion from the Communist Party. They wanted no part of him, even after he too was expelled.

Pierre Naville, writing in *La Vérité*, summed up the attitude of the French Trotskyists towards Treint, saying that "a long time ago Treint lost all political direction, and has only been preoccupied with finding a place and a role in the opposition movement. He has never gone beyond the position of Zinoviev, he has never attempted a serious critique of all his political errors between 1924 and now. . . ."¹⁸

However, Deutscher has noted that "Trotsky nevertheless invited Treint to Prinkipo, in May 1929, and through a whole month tried to bring about a reconciliation. But the old resentments were too strong, and Treint, trying to justify his behavior in

1924, did nothing to assuage them. Trotsky, pressed by his own followers, had to part from Treint; but their parting was more friendly than that with Souvarine, and they remained in amicable though remote relations."¹⁹

A fourth element which Trotsky had hoped to attract to his united French Opposition consisted of the group of revolutionary syndicalists from the periodical *Révolution Proletarienne* and the Syndicalist League. They were headed by Pierre Monatte and Robert Louzon. Trotsky had known them before 1917, and in part due to his influence, apparently, they had joined the Communist Party after 1920. They, like many others, had been expelled from the party during the campaign against Trotsky's followers.

Of this group Isaac Deutscher said that "their personal attachment to Trotsky was still strong; but their experience with the Comintern confirmed them in their old distaste for politics, and in the belief that militant trade union activity, culminating in the general strike was the highway to socialist revolution. Hard as Trotsky tried, he did not manage to bring them back to the Leninist view of the paramount importance of the revolutionary party and induce them to join in the struggle for a reform of the Comintern."²⁰

Launching of *La Verité*

When all was said and done, those who finally rallied to Trotsky's banner in France and began more or less seriously the task of establishing an organization and beginning consistent agitation on behalf of Leon Trotsky's ideas and political positions constituted a mere handful. The three outstanding figures in the beginning were undoubtedly Alfred Rosmer, Pierre Naville, and Raymond Molinier. At the beginning, Molinier had not formally left the Communist Party.

In this earliest phase of activity Alfred Rosmer was the most important French

Trotskyist. His personal relationship with Trotsky was of long standing and very close. He was a generation older than most of his French colleagues, in fact two years older than Trotsky himself. At first it was upon him that Trotsky relied most, not only to start the work of building up the French Left Opposition, but also to establish firsthand contacts with Trotsky's followers elsewhere in Europe. Isaac Deutscher has noted that "in the summer of 1929 Rosmer went on a tour of Germany and Belgium to inspect and rally groups of the Opposition there; and he established contact with Italian, Dutch, American, and other Trotskyists. In detailed reports he kept Trotsky informed about his findings."²¹

Trotsky felt that the first important task was to establish a newspaper which would be the official voice of the Left Opposition in France and a vehicle for publishing information and documentation on the movement elsewhere, particularly in the Soviet Union. He had at first hoped that Maurice Paz could, with the collaboration of other Oppositionists, convert his periodical *Contre le Courant* into such a publication. He soon lost patience with Paz's procrastination on the subject and entered into negotiation with Rosmer and others about launching a paper.²²

Rosmer and those working with him were ready by August 1929 to begin publication of a weekly, *La Verité*. Trotsky explained in a letter to Pierre Naville that "under *La Verité's* banner have gathered active comrades from various groups only because nothing came of attempts to get support from one of the existing groups for the creation of a weekly."²³ Trotsky further argued that "of all the possible candidates for editors of the weekly, Rosmer has the most right to confidence. . . ." because of his past history in the Communist movement.²⁴

Trotsky ended this letter to Naville saying that "I gather . . . you are likewise agreed that the group now fused around *Verité* has in the given conditions the best chances of

establishing the needed weekly. . . I should like to hope that you will soon also take the third step, namely: declare the cause of *Verité* to be your own cause."²⁵ Naville and his closest associate, Gerard Rosenthal, did do just that, joining in the publication of the new newspaper of the French Left Opposition.²⁶

Meanwhile, in "An Open Letter to the Editorial Board of *La Verité*," dated August 6, 1929, Trotsky had given his enthusiastic endorsement to the forthcoming publication. He ended the letter, "Dear friends! I am with you with all my heart. I joyfully accept your proposal for collaboration. I will do everything in my power to make this collaboration regular and systematic. I will try to supply articles for each issue on the situation in Russia, on events in world life, and on the problems of the international labor movement."²⁷

La Verité made its appearance on August 15, 1929. The first issue carried an extensive "Declaration," setting forth its orientation and point of view. This statement stressed that French capitalism was beginning a major crisis, and that the Communist Party of France, having been purged of most of its founding leaders, was in no position to take advantage of this crisis. "*The danger, as we have said, is that a new crisis of French capitalism could catch the vanguard of the French proletariat unawares. The danger is that favorable situations can be allowed to slip by, one after another, as has been seen to occur in different countries after the war. Our task is to prevent this danger by an urgent and repeated appeal to the class consciousness and the revolutionary will of the proletarian vanguard.*"²⁸

The declaration went on to say, "*One of the essential tasks of the Communist Opposition is to stop the justified indignation against a pernicious leadership from becoming a disillusionment about communism and the revolution in general. This can only be done by developing a Marxist understanding of the facts and by determin-*

ing the correct tactics according to the facts of the situation itself."²⁹

The declaration of *La Verité* conceded that "in France the Communist Left is divided into different groups, [but] this is due to the fact—and we do not exclude ourselves from this criticism—that the French Opposition has spent too much time on the preparatory stage before beginning political action among the workers." It warned that "we must clearly state that should this situation persist, the Opposition would be threatened with becoming a sect, or, more precisely, several sects."

To prevent this eventuality, the declaration stated that "we want to make our weekly the organ of the whole Left Opposition." Hence, "the orientation of the paper is sufficiently spelled out, we hope, by this declaration. . . That will not stop the editors from opening the columns of the paper to the expression of differing nuances of thought within the Communist Left."

The declaration concluded: "*La Verité* is your organ."³⁰

With the appearance of *La Verité*, the periodical *La Lutte de Classes*, which Pierre Naville had been editing for several years, became the French Trotskyists' theoretical journal. It usually contained longer and more analytical articles than *La Verité*.³¹

The Ligue Communiste

Establishment of the Ligue Communiste

Once a Left Opposition newspaper had been launched, the next task, clearly, was the establishment of a formal organization by members of the tendency. In January 1930 Trotsky professed himself to be very optimistic about the possibilities of such an organization. Apparently writing in the *Russian Opposition Bulletin*, he said "*La Verité* has introduced, or to put it more modestly, *has begun* to introduce, order into this chaos. During the short period of this publi-

cation's existence, it has been fully confirmed that the *Verité* grouping is not accidental, that it is now the *basic* nucleus of the Communist Left in France, and that the consolidation of the vanguard communist elements will take place around this grouping."

Trotsky went on to say that "after the strenuous efforts of the first period, the gathering of forces will be accomplished ever more quickly. The revolutionary workers, searching for the correct revolutionary leadership, must be convinced through their own experience that—contrary to the lies and slanders of the Stalinists—the Opposition will not pull them back to syndicalism or to the right toward reformism, and that it in no way seeks to begin history from the beginning, i.e. to build a new party in a new phase as if the war, the October Revolution, and the rise of the Third International had never happened."³²

In spite of Trotsky's optimism, the Left Opposition remained a tiny group. Although a formal organization, the Communist League, was established in April 1930, it did not succeed in gaining a mass following. Jean van Heijenoort has described the state of the Communist League two years after it was established: "At that time there were no membership cards. We were so few; hardly twenty or so were really active."

Van Heijenoort went on to say that "I took part in the activities of the group, which consisted mostly in carrying on discussions and in selling *La Verité*, the weekly published by the group, at subway stations in the evening when the workers were coming home from work, or in the streets of working class districts on Sunday morning. At night we would put up posters, and often ended up at a police station, since we had no money to put the required stamps on the posters." He observed that, "I was the first member of the Ligue who had not passed through the Communist Party or the Young Communist League."³³

Compared to the Communist Party, the

Ligue Communiste was miniscule. The founders of *La Verité* had estimated in the first issue of their newspaper that "the official party now contains some twenty or thirty thousand members. It controls—in a sorry way—the CGTU, which has about 300,000 members. In the last elections the party obtained more than a million votes."³⁴

The First Factional Fight

In spite of its small size, the Ligue Communiste was the scene of the first of many bitter factional fights within a few months of its establishment. As was to be the case in the factional quarrels later in the decade, the principal figures on the two sides were Pierre Naville and Raymond Molinier. In this first quarrel, in the middle of 1930, Alfred Rosmer was aligned with Naville, although he finally withdrew from the organization in November 1930.³⁵

We have noted that Raymond Molinier had been very helpful to Trotsky when the exiled Russian leader was first settling down in Turkey, and that Trotsky had developed a high regard for him. For about half-a-dozen years, Trotsky was to continue to be favorably disposed toward Molinier. However, from the beginning there was a certain cloud of suspicion which hung around the man. As Naomi Allen and George Breitman explained it, "some political opponents charged that he was an unscrupulous businessman and adventurer who did not belong in the revolutionary movement; his reputation was also clouded by a business bankruptcy and allegations that he had pleaded insanity to escape imprisonment for desertion as an army conscript in the 1920s. Rosmer and Naville thought Molinier was unfit to be a leader of the French section. . . ."³⁶

The campaign of rumors against Molinier had become an issue as early as June 1929. Then Trotsky had written Pierre Gourget that "I am in complete agreement with you that we cannot tolerate lies and slanders

spread about a comrade who is distinguished from others by the fault of being more energetic and more generous in his actions. There can be no doubt the many comrades will be exposed to 'arguments' of this kind." Trotsky proposed that the members of the French Left Opposition lay the issue at rest once and for all by setting up a commission "composed of irreproachable revolutionaries" to look into it. He suggested the names of Rosmer and Pierre Monatte, and said that if as he hoped he was able to come to London, he would be glad to serve on the commission himself.³⁷

This suggestion apparently did not reflect any doubts of Trotsky himself concerning Molinier. When a year later the National Executive of the Ligue Communiste, dominated by Rosmer and Naville, sought to exclude Molinier from membership, and the Paris Committee of the organization totally rejected the idea, so did Trotsky.

On June 26, 1930, Trotsky wrote Pierre Naville that "you say that R.M. should not 'go beyond the limits within which he is capable of doing something. . . . For my part, I believe that every member of the organization can and must know, analyze, and criticize all the questions that form the content of our activity. There are no 'limits' for anyone."

Trotsky added that "you have tried to eliminate M. from his post. You remain in the minority. That shows that you have proceeded with too much light-mindedness, without facing the mood of the organization. After the setback you wanted to exclude M. from the Opposition! How could you do this? By a small coup d'etat. I don't understand any of this."³⁸

Finally, Trotsky "invited Comrades Molinier and Naville to visit me. I spent several days discussing all the disputed questions with them and . . . we arrived at agreement on certain measures which we jokingly called 'the peace of Prinkipo.' These measures included the creation of a control commission to rule on all the accusations of a personal nature. . . . At a plenary session of

the League these measures were adopted unanimously. . . ."

Peace was by no means totally restored. Trotsky, about a year later, reported to the leadership of his Belgian group that "the conditions of the 'peace of Prinkipo' were violated in a disloyal fashion by Comrade Naville. Comrade Rosmer thought it possible to continue casting unwarranted aspersions on the character of Comrade Molinier without addressing himself to the control commission."³⁹

This struggle undoubtedly seriously weakened the French Trotskyists. Although Trotsky claimed that "the differences with the Naville group have basically always been differences of principle," Pierre Naville remained in the organization. In contrast, Alfred Rosmer withdrew both from the French Ligue and the international organization. In June 1931 Trotsky alleged to his Belgian followers that "Comrade Rosmer has become the flag of all those elements that are conducting a battle against our fundamental ideas, and who have up to now greatly compromised the ideas of the Left Opposition, compromised them to a far greater extent than they have propagated them."⁴⁰ Isaac Deutscher has noted with regard to Rosmer that "for several years he refused to meet him or even to exchange views" with Trotsky.⁴¹ It was not until Trotsky's move to Mexico more than half a decade later that friendly personal relations were reestablished between the two men, but Rosmer never did return to the ranks of the Left Communist Opposition.

Meanwhile, Trotsky wrote to Pierre Naville, "You know, I've never seen faction fights like yours. With us (Russians) there were many of them. It wasn't always sweet, oh no. But ferocious rows like yours, no. I've never seen that. It's extraordinary. How is it possible? It must be straightened out."⁴²

Stagnation of the Ligue Communiste (1930-34)

The years 1930-34 were a period of relative stagnation for the French Trotskyist move-

ment. The Ligue Communiste remained a tiny organization, predominantly middle class in social composition and quite unable to make any significant imprint on French politics, even on the politics of the French Left.

There were some new adhesions to the movement during this period. Albert Treint, the old Zinovievist, did finally join the Ligue Communiste in May 1931. However, he brought very few other people with him and apparently sowed a certain amount of disension in the ranks of the Ligue because of his constant attempts to justify his actions when, as head of the Communist Party, he had major responsibility for expelling the Trotskyites from the party. Trotsky on various occasions sought to have Treint drop the subject and get on with the work of building a viable Left Communist Opposition. He even had Treint come to Prinkipo to talk things over personally, but it would appear that to a considerable degree the two men talked past one another.⁴³

Another addition to the Ligue's ranks was a small group of Yiddish-speaking Jewish workers, principally in the Paris region. The group issued a periodical *Klorheit* (*Clarity*).⁴⁴ Trotsky was not particularly happy with the performance of these new adherents, accusing them of not integrating themselves into the general work of the Ligue, but of trying to function as an autonomous if not independent organization within the Ligue, along the lines of the Jewish Labor Bund in prerevolutionary Russia. Their principal virtue seems to have been that they were a predominantly working-class group.⁴⁵

Early in 1934 the French Trotskyists had considerable hope of attracting an important dissident element which broke away from the Communist Party. This was the CP unit in St.-Denis, in the working-class environs of Paris and led by Jacques Doriot, mayor of St.-Denis and one of the major figures in the French Communist Party. Doriot was a "premature" advocate of a united front between the Communists and the socialists,

adopting this position more than six months before the Communist Party itself suddenly accepted it, presumably on the direction from the CPSU and the Comintern.

After the fascist riots of February 6, 1934, which were followed by a general strike called by both the CGT and CGTU and supported by the Socialist and Communist parties, Doriot set up in his city a series of "vigilance committees" which sought to bring together workers of all political complexions to confront any possible fascist incursions and to be embryos for future soviets.

Some of the Trotskyists apparently participated in the vigilance committees. But they went much further than that in trying to win Doriot and his followers over to Trotskyism.⁴⁶ Their efforts were fruitless; Doriot quickly moved to the Right, became an avowed fascist, and played a minor role in the Vichy regime during World War II.

Although relatively few trade unionists belonged to the Trotskyist movement in this period those who did carried on political work mainly within the Communist Party-dominated group, the CGTU. Trotsky wrote in June 1934 that "nowhere in the CGTU is there a solid fraction; only twelve members at most hold responsible posts in it. There is no fraction in the CGT."⁴⁷

Within the CGTU the Trotskyists supported the so-called Unitary Opposition. It was opposed both to the Communist Party dominated leadership of the confederation and to the syndicalists' Committee for Independence, an opposition group within the CGTU with a stronger base than that of the Unitary Opposition.⁴⁸ On at least one occasion the issue of correct trade union tactics generated controversy within the Trotskyists' ranks.⁴⁹

One important activity of the French Trotskyists which was appreciated by their leader was helping to mount an international organization for the movement. In a "Report on the State of the Left Opposition" in December 1932 Trotsky wrote, in connection with his meetings with followers

during his visit to Copenhagen, that "the major part of the preparatory work for the consultation lay as usual upon the French League, which was broadly represented in Copenhagen." He added that "the French section of the Left Opposition . . . is marked by very great international initiative. The League took an active part in making contact with almost all the other sections and contributed to their development by illuminating all questions of the International in the pages of its organs."⁵⁰

Factionalism continued within French Trotskyist ranks during much of this period. However, in this same report on the international organization in December 1932 Trotsky claimed that "the League itself in any case has passed the period of uninterrupted internal struggle and has worked out an indispensable unity of ideas and methods." But he warned that "without wishing to minimize this achievement in the least, we must still remember that with so narrow a base in the working class, political unity cannot be distinguished by great permanence. . . ."⁵¹

For the next year and a half relative tranquility reigned within the ranks of the French Trotskyists. It was not until Trotsky decided on a new major tactical maneuver for his followers in France and elsewhere in mid-1934 that a new period of factionalism was to develop, one which was in fact to split the French Trotskyist movement into two bitterly competing organizations.

Schisms in French Trotskyism

The Advent of the French Turn

The new tactic, which was immediately to be known as the "French Turn" because it was first suggested by Trotsky to his French followers, and later was often referred to as "entrism," was precipitated by the advent of the United Front between French Socialist and Communist parties in June 1934. Trotsky saw both a danger and a new oppor-

tunity for the Trotskyists in this event. In order to avoid one and take advantage of the other, he urged his French supporters to enter the Socialist Party as a group and to form a faction within the SFIO.

Until 1934 the only possible "entrism" which the French Trotskyists had at all contemplated was a return to the Communist Party. Thus, in February 1931 they sent a letter to the Communist Party demanding "the reintegration of the Left Opposition so that it can work in the CP for its reform and its strengthening." They made a similar demand later in that year. Of course, the Communists did not seriously consider re-admitting the Trotskyites.⁵²

The formation of the United Front, which provoked the idea of the French Turn, had come about in part because of the beginning of a change in the Third Period extremely sectarian line of the Communist International. It was more immediately provoked by the events of February 6, 1934, when there were serious riots provoked by several fascist and semi-fascist groups. These riots brought about the fall of the government of Edouard Daladier and establishment of a "national unity" cabinet headed by ex-President Paul Domergue. At the time of the installation of the Domergue regime, the Trotskyists had unsuccessfully called for a general strike against it.⁵³

The issue of entrism into the Socialist Party generated considerable conflict within the French Trotskyist ranks. Although this controversy in France was fairly quickly resolved, the concept of the Trotskyists functioning within non-Trotskyist political parties was to remain an issue of violent debate for the next half-century.

Trotsky made his proposal for his French followers to enter the Socialist Party in June 1934. He did so in several documents, one of the most extensive of which was "The State of the League and Its Tasks," dated June 29, 1934. In this, he presented his reasons for his recommendation and the nature of the entrism which he was proposing.

Summing up the danger of isolation of the Ligue Communiste which he foresaw if they continued to function independently in the face of the Socialist-Communist United Front, he wrote, "in the revolutionary struggles that are beginning, our frail cruiser will throw itself into battle—but in the wake of large political formations, which are starting to put their ranks in battle order through the united front. The maneuver itself absorbs the entire attention of the crew, whose eyes are fixed anxiously on the horizon, and the tougher the struggle becomes the more the respective general staffs will be able to isolate our frail ship, even to sink it. *That is the real danger in the present situation: we seem to be coming to these struggles from the outside.* . . ."⁵⁴

Given that situation, Trotsky argued, the Trotskyists needed to be able to work within one or another of the parties in the United Front. He commented that "as revolutionary parties, the SFIO and CP are equally bankrupt. But in this period of upheavals and readjustments it is our task to adjust our tactics according to both our knowledge of the environment and our opportunities for creating the new revolutionary party. We must therefore observe that the internal political life of the Stalinist party is nil and that the possibility of developing a tendency in its midst must be excluded. . . . The Socialist Party, on the other hand, has preserved throughout this whole period a relatively intense life, all proportions considered."

Trotsky also noted with regard to the SFIO "the fact that the internal regime, in spite of the bureaucracy's power, has not yet straitjacketed the rank and file and permits a certain freedom of movement among sections of the workers."⁵⁵

Trotsky urged that his followers openly enter the SFIO. He argued that "its internal situation permits the possibility of our entering it under our own banner. The environment suits the aims we have set for ourselves. . . . There is no question of dissolving

ourselves. *We enter as the Bolshevik-Leninist faction, our organizational ties remain the same, our press continues to exist just as do 'Bataille Socialist' and others.*"⁵⁶

Trotsky's suggestion caused considerable consternation among his French supporters and in other countries as well. Naomi Allen and George Breitman have noted that "the proposal to enter the SFIO came as a shock to many members of the ICL and elicited a good deal of resistance outside France as well as inside. To formalistic minds it seemed to be in glaring contradiction to the call for a new International and new revolutionary national parties, and in violation of the principle that the revolutionary party must remain independent under all conditions: some rejected it as a betrayal of principle . . . others opposed it on tactical grounds."⁵⁷

Within the French group, Raymond Molinier immediately supported the idea and his chief lieutenant Pierre Frank did so after some hesitation. Pierre Naville was very much opposed to it. There were two months of discussion within the Ligue Communiste, and at a conference in Paris late in August 1934 the Ligue decided by "a decisive majority . . . to dissolve the Communist League and join the SFIO," which they did the following month. There they established the Groupe Bolchevik-Leniniste (GBL), with *La Verité* as its publication.⁵⁸

Pierre Naville did not agree with this decision. For some time he and his closest followers refused to abide by it, although subsequently they did join the SFIO, where they formed a separate group known as the Internationalist Communists.⁵⁹ That group maintained *La Lutte de Classes*, which had until then been the theoretical organ of the Ligue Communiste, as its publication.⁶⁰

In October 1934 the International Communist League, the movement's international organization, held a plenum in Paris, attended by, among others, James P. Cannon of the American Trotskyists. It adopted a resolution urging the Naville group to join

forces with the CGL "on the basis of a common discipline."⁶¹ However, the two Trotskyist groups remained separate until, under Trotsky's insistent urging, they finally reunited at a congress in September 1935, by which time the reversal of the French Turn was already under way.⁶²

Trotskyists in the Socialist Party

The French Turn proved to be a profitable one for Trotsky's French followers. Very quickly they were able to develop an appreciable degree of influence within the SFIO, and particularly in its youth group. However, subsequent factional struggles within the Trotskyite group over the question of withdrawing from the SFIO resulted in the loss of much of the ground gained during the execution of the policy.

The Trotskyists made particular progress within the Seine Federation of the Socialist Party, covering Paris. The U.S. Trotskyist periodical *New Militant* reported in April 1935 of their French colleagues that "their influence in the SP has grown rapidly, until almost every militant, in the Seine district at least, is a propagandist for their ideas. Their platform is advanced in every internal discussion in the party." This article continued: "Their press, *La Verité*, and their pamphlets have a wide circulation not only inside the party but outside as well (at public meetings, on the streets, at demonstrations. At a demonstration on November 10, 800 copies of a special number of *La Verité* were sold in a few hours). In the principal sections of the Seine District of the SP Trotskyists occupy responsible posts and are at the head of practical work. They are the prime movers in propaganda and membership campaigns. They have taken a leading part in the creation and development of physical defense corps and military committees, the embryos of workers militia."⁶³

Although the Trotskyists' major influence was in Paris, they had some support in Socialist Party federations in the provinces.

New Militant reported that in the congress of the Morocco Federation ten delegates of the Bolshevik-Leninist Group were elected to the Mulhouse Congress of the party; the Marne Federation had chosen five Trotskyist delegates, the Trotskyists getting 120 of the 700 votes in the regional convention; while in the Rhône Department, the CGL received 15 percent of the votes and elected nine delegates, and in several others they were able to elect delegates to the national congress.⁶⁴

The Trotskyists made particular headway in the Young Socialists, the SFIO's youth group, again particularly in the Seine region. Naomi Allen and George Breitman have noted that "they established close working relations with the left wing leading the Seine Alliance and through it began publishing a paper, *Révolution*, which claimed sales of 50,000 copies per issue in August 1935, as against 30,000 for the official national JS paper. This left bloc had around one-third of the delegates of the national JS congress in July."⁶⁵

Summing up the successes of the Trotskyists within the SFIO, Daniel Guerin was authority for the assertion that "even if the Trotskyist conceptions of organization violated the libertarian penchant of the socialists, the Bolshevik-Leninists by their 'revolutionary lucidity' and their 'courage' succeeded in carrying out a 'profound propaganda' and had a 'happy influence on Marcéau Pivert whom they pushed towards the extreme left.'"⁶⁶

The highpoint of Trotskyist influence undoubtedly came at the Mulhouse Congress of the Socialist Party in June 1935. There the main subject of discussion was the expansion of the Socialist-Communist United Front into the Popular Front, including the Radical Socialist Party. The motion in favor had the support of two-thirds of the delegates. However, as Allen and Breitman noted, "the voice of revolutionary Marxism was heard at an SFIO congress for the first time since 1920 as the CGL, together with

the Naville group, compelled the congress to debate or at least listen to its position on 'national defense,' the need for the Fourth International, etc." The final vote on the major political resolution was 2,025 for that sponsored by Leon Blum and Paul Faure, 777 for that of the non-Trotskyist Left, and 105 for that of the GBL. The congress elected Jean Rous of the GBL to the National Administrative Committee (CAP) of the Socialist Party, with Pierre Frank as his alternate.⁶⁷ Although not elected to any position at the Mulhouse Congress, Pierre Naville participated actively in the debate on several of the issues presented there. He was subjected to considerable heckling from non-Trotskyist delegates.⁶⁸

The Stalinists were particularly perturbed by the influence, albeit very moderate, of the Trotskyists within the Socialist Party. *New Militant* noted on April 13, 1935 that "the Stalinists are in a regular frenzy. No longer able to crush Trotskyists by bureaucratic terror, they now devote scarce heads and long articles to 'The Trotskyists Who Mean Nothing.' Maurice Thorez himself, the chief of the Stalinist Party, stirs out of his office to deliver speeches in which he warns the Socialists that 'the Trotskyists who mean nothing' 'wish to destroy the Socialist Party.' "

The Trotskyists seem to have underestimated the importance of the Stalinists' pressure against them. Naomi Allen and George Breitman have noted that "Blum's warning that the GBL would be ousted if it obstructed collaboration with the Stalinists was not taken seriously by the GBL leaders, who seemed indifferent to the heavy pressure that the Stalinist bureaucrats were exerting on their Social Democratic counterparts to purge the 'Trotskyists.' "⁶⁹

*Origins of 1935-36 Split in
French Trotskyism*

As he had taken the initiative in suggesting the French Turn, Leon Trotsky took the lead

in urging an end to the maneuver. Allen and Breitman have observed that "independently of the congress, he felt that the SFIO episode was virtually finished and wrote a letter recommending that the section make a shift in its orientation away from the SFIO and toward the construction of a new revolutionary party." At the same time he urged speedy reunification of the GBL and the Naville group. Allen and Breitman suggested that Trotsky was motivated not only by his belief that the Trotskyists had gotten about all they could out of the Socialist Party, but also by his belief that a new war [around the issue of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia] might be imminent and that there was therefore an urgent need to have both a French revolutionary party and the new Fourth International in place to confront such a situation.⁷⁰

Trotsky's suggestion that his followers now orient towards leaving the Socialist Party provoked a new schism within French Trotskyist ranks. As in the past, Pierre Naville led one faction, favoring following Trotsky's advice; Raymond Molinier led another, opposing the move. New elements in the picture were the emergence of the third "centrist" group led by Jean Rous and the fact that this time Trotsky was strongly aligned with Naville and against Molinier, whom he had supported so strongly for half a dozen years.

The basic disagreement centered on the belief of Molinier and his supporters that the Trotskyists still had much to gain by aligning themselves with Marceau Pivert within the Socialist Party. Pivert had broken from the Bataille Socialiste group dominated by the pro-Stalinist Jean Zyromski to form his own Revolutionary Tendency (RT) and Molinier fought to have the Bolshevik-Leninists join forces with the RT. Naville strongly opposed that idea in words but was slow about organizing a formal withdrawal of the Groupe Bolchevik-Leniniste (reunited in September 1935) from the Socialist Party. The Jean Rous group sided basically with

Naville, but was more willing than Naville to give Molinier room to experiment with the Pivert Socialists.

Trotsky was unhappy about all three groups of his followers. He felt that Naville had the right orientation but was very critical of his unwillingness to put that orientation into effect. He became increasingly hostile toward what he denounced as the "centrism" of Molinier. At the same time he was exasperated by the apparent zigzags of the Rous faction.

Much of the controversy centered on the question of issuing a "mass paper." All factions agreed that such a paper should be issued; various alternatives (converting *La Verité* into such an organ, using the Young Socialists' *Révolution*, or issuing an entirely new paper, the notion favored by Molinier) were suggested. Controversy centered on whether this should be a purely Bolshevik-Leninist publication or one issued by the GBL and its allies within the Socialist ranks, and on whether it should frankly put forward the Trotskyists' position favoring a new revolutionary party and the Fourth International. Naturally Trotsky strongly favored a frankly Trotskyist periodical, but his supporters within the GBL hesitated to carry out his ideas and Molinier went ahead with his own plans for a watered down "mass paper."

Split, Reunification, Split

On December 6, 1935 the first issue of *La Commune*, the new Molinier "mass paper" appeared, supposedly representing several far Left groups, against the orders of the GBL Central Committee, and shortly afterward Molinier was removed from that committee and from the International Secretariat of the International. This consummated the split within the French Trotskyist ranks.⁷¹

The new newspaper was not particularly successful in gaining a mass audience in spite of the fact that it did not advocate a clearly Trotskyist point of view. However,

Molinier soon stole another march on his opponents when the January 17, 1936, issue of *La Commune* announced the establishment of a new Committee for the Fourth International (CQI) and soon afterwards announced that the CQI was applying for admission to a new Secretariat for the Fourth International, known as the Amsterdam Secretariat, which the international movement had recently established.

Molinier followed this up by organizing a convention to launch a new party on March 7, 1936, which resulted in the establishment of the Internationalist Communist Party (Parti Communiste Internationaliste—PCI), which proclaimed itself to be the "French Section of the Fourth International."⁷²

The GBL faction headed by Pierre Naville and backed by Leon Trotsky was also moving towards the establishment of its own party. The first step was taken early in January 1936 when the Bolshevik-Leninists and their allies in the Young Socialists formally established a new organization, the Revolutionary Socialist Youth (Jeunesse Socialiste Révolutionnaire—JSR). It continued to publish the organ of the Young Socialists, *Révolution*. The GBL and JSR issued a joint proclamation calling for the establishment of a new revolutionary party.⁷³

However, although the GBL had planned for a congress to found a new party to meet on April 12, after the establishment of the PCI in March the International Secretariat urged the GBL to seek reunification. As a result, the planned congress was called off.

Negotiations went on for several months between the two Trotskyist groups aiming at their reunification. During that period both groups ran candidates in parliamentary elections, although the GBL refused to collaborate with the PCI in the campaign. Neither group got more than a few hundred votes in any one constituency.

Finally, on May 31, 1936 the GBL was converted into the Internationalist Workers Party (Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste—POI). Then, on the following day it merged with

the PCI under the name of the POI, and this new group was promptly recognized as the French section of the International Communist League. It was reported to the unity convention that the new POI had 615 members.

The Central Committee of the new party was composed of seven from the old GAR, seven from the PCI, and three from the JSR. Raymond Molinier became a member of the Central Committee but not of the Political Bureau. The official organ of the new POI was to be called *La Lutte Ouvrière* and the details of a new party constitution were left for decision by a congress which was supposed to meet on August 15, 1936.⁷⁴

But the new unity did not last for long. The International Secretariat reminded the Central Committee of the POI that Molinier was only "provisionally" a member of the group and demanded that he immediately cease his business activities "not just in words but in fact." Three Molinierists, including Pierre Frank, objected, and as a consequence were suspended from the committee. As a result, all the Molinier group boycotted further meetings of the Central Committee, starting with that of July 12, 1936.⁷⁵

Trotsky was clearly aligned with the anti-Molinier group, as a result of which Molinier and one of his associates went to Norway to see Trotsky, but although listening to them, Trotsky refused to negotiate with them in any way.⁷⁶

The new break was consummated at the POI's first regular congress in October 1936. At that meeting "the Molinierists marched out crying fraud," and "several of the delegates threw punches at one another."⁷⁷

The POI from 1936 to 1939

Weakened by constant feuding and the withdrawal of the Molinier faction, the POI remained small, quarrelsome, and largely impotent. At its second congress late in 1937 there was a bitter debate over whether the

Soviet Union could still be considered a workers' state. About one third of the delegates voted for the resolution offered by Jean Craipeau arguing that such was not the case.⁷⁸ Trotsky wrote a reply to Craipeau's arguments.⁷⁹

The POI published a "mass organ," *La Lutte Ouvrière*, first as a weekly, then as a monthly. It also put out a "theoretical review," *Quatrième Internationale*, which was edited by Pierre Naville and was the successor to his old publication *La Lutte de Classes*.⁸⁰

In April 1938 Trotsky wrote to Cannon and Shachtman about the deplorable state of the French section. "The development of our French section is not satisfactory. They do not communicate any statistics to us, which is a bad sign in itself. The newspaper does not appear regularly. The same is true of the so-called monthly. They have not a single man with organizational capacities."⁸¹

The Founding Conference of the Fourth International, which met about six months after Trotsky's letter to the American Trotskyists, adopted a "Resolution on the Tasks of the French Section" which ran to nine and a half printed pages. The tone of that document can be gauged from its argument that "the inadequacies of the POI's leadership are shown by an increasing organizational letdown, with as a sequel, the existence of a certain 'revolutionary' amateurism, the lack of a serious party administration, of a normally functioning national treasury, and of a *Lutte Ouvrière* editorship which is stable and full of the spirit of emulation. Naturally to some extent these inadequacies result from the lack of even a modest organizational apparatus composed of comrades who devote all their time to party work."⁸²

This resolution criticized virtually all aspects of the functioning of the POI. It noted that "the POI's financial situation has always been very bad. The dues are either not paid at all, or if they are, it is just by luck, without supervision of the leadership." It

urged establishment of a full-time treasurer and that "anyone who will not pay his dues regularly should after due warning have his membership in the POI cut off."⁸³

The Fourth International was very critical of *La Lutte Ouvrière*. "First of all, it is necessary to fight against the stupid and primitive ideology which has crept in under the borrowed label of 'mass newspaper.'"⁸⁴ It urged that articles be signed, that the paper be better edited, and written so as to be attractive to workers. Furthermore, it argued that "to keep up its regular weekly appearance is an absolute duty."⁸⁵

The resolution was particularly critical of the failure of the POI to work effectively in the labor movement in spite of constant proclamations of its intention to do so. It commented that "the lack of directed trade union work has failed to make the development of the workers' struggle and the exact understanding of their demands really living subjects in the party. Thus it comes about that, with its weak forces, the POI has weak connection in the factories—a work insufficiently tied up with the workers' day-to-day lives."⁸⁶

The Fourth International proposed a series of organizational reforms which the POI should make. It promised that if the kind of steps it suggested were made the International Secretariat would guarantee to provide some subsidy to the French section "in order that the French section may get its paper out with regularity and assure the functioning of its activities and its organizational work according to the general measures herein recommended."⁸⁷

The POI was faced with new complications at the end of 1938, when Marceau Pivert and his followers were finally driven out of the French Socialist Party and established their own Workers and Peasants Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste Ouvrier et Paysan—PSOP). One element of the POI led by Jean Rous and Ivan Craipeau favored a new "entry" into the PSOP, but Joannes Barden and Pierre Naville, with a majority of the POI leadership, opposed this.

As a consequence there was a new split, with the Rous-Craipeau group deciding to enter the PSOP in spite of the position of the POI. According to Allen and Breitman, the entrists "made headway inside the PSOP, winning over the leadership of the PSOP youth group and becoming part of a left wing that got over one-fourth of the votes at the PSOP's second congress in June 1939."⁸⁸ Within the PSOP this group published a periodical, *La Voie de Lenine*.⁸⁹

Trotsky and the International Secretariat of the Fourth International supported the position of Rous and Craipeau. They called upon the rest of the POI to enter the PSOP. When the POI leadership refused to do so the International Secretariat "withdrew its recognition of the POI as the French section of the Fourth International in July 1939, a few weeks before the start of World War II."⁹⁰ Only then did most of the recalcitrants enter the PSOP. A small group which still refused to do so continued to publish *La Lutte Ouvrière* as the organ of the 'reconstructed' POI, "but without any mention of a connection with the Fourth International."⁹¹

The PCI from 1936 to 1939

The PCI of Raymond Molinier and Pierre Frank was in much better shape than the POI during much of this period. Trotsky wrote to Cannon and Shachtman that "I know practically nothing about the real state of the *Commune* organization, but their paper is incomparably richer. Until last month it appeared weekly; now it appears in small format *three times a week*. They published a thick 'theoretical' symposium and numerous leaflets and pamphlets." Trotsky recognized that "this competition is causing general confusion and is extremely prejudicial to our section."⁹² One can only speculate that this better performance was at least in part due to Molinier's despised financial resources.

The PCI revived *La Verité* under the editorship of Pierre Frank, but this time as a

"theoretical journal." It claimed lineal descent from the original French Trotskyist periodical.⁹³

The appearance of the PSOP of Marceau Pivert presented much the same problem to the PCI as to the POI. However, the PCI prepared the ground as the possibility of the expulsion of the Pivertists from the SPJO grew to be a probability. A number of the youth of the PCI, led by Rodolphe Prager, were sent into the Autonomous Federation of Socialist Youth dominated by the Pivertist group.

In October 1938 the PCI announced its decision to dissolve its organization and have its members join the PSOP as individuals. This was done early in December. The PSOP decided that neither Raymond Molinier nor Pierre Frank would be allowed to join the party before their records had been scanned by a "committee of inquiry" headed by Molinier's old enemy Alfred Rosmer. The congress of the PSOP in May 1939 decided almost unanimously not only to exclude Molinier from its ranks, but "forbade any member, under penalty of exclusion, from having the least relation with him." When shortly afterward there was a meeting of former members of the PCI, with Molinier being present, the executive of the PSOP expelled all those who attended. They included Roger Foirier, Pierre Lambert and Jacques Privas, former leaders of the PCI youth and of the PSOP youth.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, one of the last acts of cooperation of the two Trotskyist groups before the outbreak of World War II was the establishment of a committee of coordination to draw up a "projected program" for the Parti Socialiste Ouvrier et Paysan. This project was introduced by a former PCI member, Jacques Desmots, but there is no record available concerning how much support it received within the PSOP.⁹⁵

Efforts by the Molinier group to gain entry into the new Fourth International, established on September 3, 1938, were unsuccessful. As Trotsky had predicted, the PCI did formally request affiliation. The new In-

ternational Secretariat was authorized to discuss the issue after the founding conference, and it submitted an eight point resolution to the PCI as a basis for the reincorporation of its members in the POI, and hence in the International, and assuring them proportional representation in the executive and apparatus of the POI. However, Point Four of this resolution read: "The personal case of R. Molinier having been decided by the international conference in 1936, decisions which have not been changed or modified by the Conference of 1938, he remains completely outside the unified French section."⁹⁶

A statement by the International Secretariat explained that "in the subsequent discussion it became perfectly clear that Point 4 (the elimination of R. Molinier) was the only real point at issue. . . . The negotiations foundered on this point."⁹⁷

Thus, the PCI was not admitted to the Fourth International. With the exclusion of the POI from the International in July 1939, the result was that with the outbreak of World War II International Trotskyism had no official affiliate in France.

French Trotskyism During World War II

French Trotskyism remained seriously divided throughout most of World War II. It was not until February 1944 that the most important factions of the movement were brought back together in a single group. In the interim, the two rival organizations which existed at the time of the outbreak of the war were subdivided into at least five during most of the period.

All of the Trotskyist groups continued to be active throughout the war. They fought against the successive French governments of the period and against the German occupying power. One of the factions made a heroic but exceedingly dangerous effort to spread the message of international working-class revolutionary solidarity among the occupying German troops. All factions continued their hostility toward the French Communist Party, although continuing to support the cause of the Soviet Union as a "workers state." The list of French Trotskyist martyrs, some executed by the Germans, others physically eliminated by the Stalinists in the underground, was a long one, particularly for such a tiny group.

All Trotskyist groups were convinced that World War II was going to be followed by a cataclysmic collapse of international capitalism and by the long hoped-for "political revolution" against the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union. Their mistaken assessment of the nature of the struggle and of its likely outcome was a principal cause of the inability of the Trotskyists to take advantage of the "opportunities" created for them by World War II.

The Trotskyists During the "Phony War"

The Nazi war machine attacked Poland on September 1, 1939, thus starting the Second

World War. Two days later the French and British officially declared war on Germany. However, between September 1939 and April 1940 there was very little military activity on the Western Front, and this period went down in history as that of the "phony war."

This was a period of great confusion and considerable disorganization insofar as the French Trotskyists were concerned. On the one hand they suffered from the fact that most males of military age were mobilized into the armed forces. On the other, even before the war began, the French government had imposed severe limitations on civil liberties and soon thereafter the Communist Party was outlawed; the police raided headquarters not only of the Stalinists but also of other left-wing groups, many radicals of all stripes being arrested and subjected to prosecution and incarceration. Many Trotskyists were included.

Jacqueline Pluet-Déspatin has noted concerning the impact of the outbreak of war on the Trotskyists that "as Trotsky had foreseen in April 1939, the war made the two organizations lose two thirds of their militants, who were dispersed, isolated, mobilized or arrested."¹ Jean-Pierre Cassard has also noted of the Trotskyists that "as a group, they maintained themselves, but with difficulty. The contacts with the provinces were broken. Bourgeois repression curbed them. . . . The extreme youth of the militants meant that they were mobilized. Dozens of Trotskyists were rounded up in the process of general mobilization. . . . Most of the mobilized Trotskyist militants only rejoined their organizations after the debacle" of May-June 1940.²

However, both major Trotskyist factions maintained a semblance of organization. The ex-Parti Ouvrier, Internationaliste [which until shortly before the outbreak of the war had been the official French section of the Fourth International] remained split until after the phony war between those who had entered the *rsor* of Marceau Pivert

and those who had not. The latter group, headed by Marcel Hic and David Rousset, maintained a separate group until August 1940.³

Meanwhile, the Trotskyists of the POR who were within the PSOP argued at a meeting of the Permanent Administrative Committee (CAP) of that organization on August 31, 1939 that the PSOP should go underground. This motion was defeated, and it was decided that the PSOP would continue as a legal party and maintain its legal newspaper *juin* 36. Only four issues of the monthly periodical were able to appear thereafter, all of them heavily censored by the authorities. The last issue was for January–February 1940. After that date the party for all practical purposes disappeared.⁴

The Trotskyists, in the meanwhile, had decided to break PSOP discipline and go underground "although maintaining some contacts with the legal organization."⁵ On September 1 they established a new group, the *Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale*. It soon began to publish an underground newspaper *L'Étincelle*, and also put out one issue during the phoney war period of *Le Bulletin du Comité pour la IVe Internationale*, apparently designed to be the "theoretical" journal of the group.⁶ As a consequence of these actions the CAP of the PSOP decided at a further meeting on November 20, 1939 to exclude all of the POR Trotskyists from the party.⁷

At the time of the establishment of the *Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale*, one small group broke away to form still another element in French Trotskyism. Led by a man of Romanian origin named David Korner, who used the name Barta, it began to publish a periodical *L'Ouvrier*. Although consisting of only a handful of people, this group was to continue its separate existence and was the forerunner of one of the three major French Trotskyist elements of the 1950s and thereafter, the *Lutte Ouvrière* group.⁸

During and immediately after the phony

war period the *Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale* published four issues of its periodical, *L'Étincelle*. Jean-Pierre Cassard has noted that the periodical stressed that "it is the working class which will pay for the war, this imperialist war rendered possible by the betrayal of the leaders of the working class." Among the slogans it raised were "for a just peace, for an immediate peace, it is necessary to fight the capitalist regime."

The first issue of the periodical protested against the suppression of the Communist Party by the French government. It said, "The social democratic jackals are biting with all their teeth their Stalinist friends of yesterday, today garotted by the government. We, Trotskyists, in spite of the insults and the blows of yesterday, protest against the dissolution of the PCF by the bourgeoisie, against the persecution of their militants. We also have extensive accounts to settle with their chiefs for the betrayal of the labor movement. But we settle these among the workers. Against the bourgeoisie, we show solidarity." The last issue of the paper came out in September 1940, after which its place was taken by *La Vérité*.⁹

The Molinier-Frank faction of French Trotskyism (ex-Parti Communiste Internationaliste) had officially dissolved into the PSOP soon after that party was formed. They continued to function as a group, and as early as February 1939 decided that, in view of the proximity of war, they should set up an underground organization. They rented places which could serve as headquarters and dispersed their records. They also decided that there should be an executive committee which was outside the country. They picked Pierre Frank, Raymond Molinier, Maurice Segal, Braz, Ernesto and Rodolphe Prager (of the Youth) to form this committee, and these men went to Belgium, where they were at the time the war broke out. Prager had been drafted, but when he was on leave in Paris he deserted and went to Belgium to join the others.¹⁰

In Belgium the ex-PCI leaders entered into

contact particularly with the Contre la Courant group headed by Georges Vereeken, which had broken with Trotsky sometime earlier over the issue of the French Turn. They also established contacts in the Netherlands with the followers of Hendrik Sneevliet, who had also broken with Trotsky about a year before the outbreak of the war.¹¹

Those of the ex-PCI who remained in France regrouped around Henri Molinier and Charles Margne and formed the Comité Internationale pour la Construction de la IVe Internationale (CICQI). During the phony war period much of their effort was concentrated on distributing *La Correspondance Internationaliste*, printed in Belgium but smuggled extensively across the frontier.¹²

Between August 23, 1939, and April 29, 1940 twenty-four issues of *La Correspondance Internationaliste* were printed in Belgium and circulated in France. It presented the point of view of the CICQI during that period. Jean-Pierre Cassard has summed up this position, saying that "feeble and dispersed as organizations, formulating as they saw it the need for revolutionary struggle against the war, generally in a dogmatic fashion—due to their youth and inexperience—the Trotskyists resolutely aligned themselves on the side of the world revolution."¹³

La Correspondance Internationaliste expressed the Trotskyist support for revolutionary defeatism. In its first issue, even before the outbreak of the war, it declared that "defeatism is the class struggle in the war period. It is necessary therefore to express the demands of the exploited at the front and in the rear, with the object of fraternization."¹⁴

Once the war began, *La Correspondance Internationaliste* declared that "the slogan of the antifascist war was only a means of preventing the workers from carrying on the class struggle. The Bolshevik-Leninists, Communists, internationalists, have always declared that there is no distinction to be made in terms of democratic imperialism

and imperialisms with a fascist structure. We have always accused Stalinism of betraying the interests of the workers, of helping the establishment of fascism in various countries by abandoning the objective of proletarian revolution in favor of that of national defense."¹⁵

The organ of the CICQI reflected the widespread belief among the Trotskyists that the outbreak of the war presented the opportunity for them to take the leadership in bringing about the world revolution. It proclaimed in its second issue, after the war began, that "the imperialist war which has begun does not find us unprepared, it is the hour of the IVth International. The repression, the Stalinist terror in the class is dead. Finished are the claims about agents of Hitler, Trotskyist spies, pretended clandestine meetings of Leon Trotsky and Rudolph Hess, the right arm of Hitler. Stalin has succeeded in destroying the infamous Moscow trials."¹⁶

In February 1940 thirteen militants of the CICQI, together with three members of the ex-PCI, were arrested and tried for carrying on Communist propaganda and undermining the morale of the army and civil population. Among those arrested there were Charles Margne and Pierre Lambert, then a youth activist. They were sentenced to long terms in jail, but most of them succeeded in escaping from prison at the time of the Fall of France.¹⁷

Right at the end of the phony war period the Molinier-Frank group sought rapprochement with Trotsky and the Fourth International. An exchange of letters began between Raymond Molinier and Pierre Frank, who were then in Great Britain, and Trotsky and officials of the International Secretariat. The two Frenchmen first wrote Trotsky on May 25, 1940, congratulating him on having escaped the first attempt on his life and expressing an interest in "renewing relations" with him and the Fourth International. Trotsky responded on July 1, saying that for such a reconciliation the Molinierists would

have "to be loyal . . . particularly at present, in the tragic times in which we live," and added that "if you have drawn this conclusion from the past, seriously and definitively, then a sincere reconciliation would present no difficulty."¹⁸

On August 5 Molinier and Frank replied to Trotsky. They said that "we accept the rights and duties which are defined in your letter of 1 July, and this without reserve, without equivocation." They added that "we shall use all our force to make our people understand everything," and agreed that the details of the reconciliation would have to be worked out with the International Secretariat.¹⁹

This letter did not reach Trotsky before his murder. However, subsequently Molinier and Frank received a letter dated October 23, 1940, from Jean van Heijenoort, then working at the International Secretariat headquarters in New York, saying "we support the return of Ray with us. Naturally, one cannot demand of anyone that he forget the past. One cannot restore virginity. But if we seriously wish it, I am sure that we can find the way for solid and fertile collaboration." Finally, Sam Gordon, also writing from the headquarters of the International Secretariat, communicated indirectly with Frank and Molinier reasserting the IS's determination to "collaborate to our best" with them and promising "to make a more formal reconciliation in about a year of such collaboration."²⁰

This exchange of letters was written in terms of correspondence between members of the same family, because of "security considerations." Trotsky is "uncle Leon," the two erring Frenchmen are "Pierrette and Raymonde" and "cousins," the Fourth International is "the family," and the International Secretariat is "father" and "Professor Sei of New York."²¹

The Fall of France and the arrest of Molinier and Frank in Great Britain apparently broke off further communication between them and the International. It was to be al-

most four years, not one, before most of the French Trotskyists would be reunited.

Jacqueline Pluet-Déspatin has noted that during the phoney war period the Trotskyists tended largely to be concentrated in and around Paris: "The militants of the two organizations are essentially concentrated in Paris, although there are more or less concentrations in the provinces, in Marseilles, Valence, Nice, Toulouse, Mazamet, Clermont-Ferrand, Bordeaux, Lyon, Nantes, Quimper, and Brest. In spite of the existence of clandestine contacts, these cities in which the POI tendency usually is dominant, remained largely cut off from the Parisian region."²²

Overall, the French Trotskyists remained a very small group during this period. It has been estimated, more or less officially, that "{very approximately} there were thirty militants in the ex-PCI, and a hundred, or perhaps a few more in the *Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale*."²³

Confusion and Regrouping After the Fall of France

The collapse and surrender of the French government and military had during the first few weeks contradictory effects on the French Trotskyists. On the one hand the military rout of the French armed forces created millions of fleeing refugees, and surrender brought the division of France into the occupied and unoccupied sectors, in addition to total separation of Alsace-Lorraine, Brittany, and the northwestern part of France from either of these. These developments undoubtedly cut liaisons which had existed among the members of the Trotskyist movement during the phony war period.

On the other hand the chaos surrounding the defeat and surrender facilitated the escape of Trotskyist political prisoners and the desertion of Trotskyist draftees from the armed forces, and the return of both kinds of people to the civil society where they could enter into contact with their political

comrades. Likewise, the total defeat of France had the immediate effect, particularly among French workers, of more or less absolutely discrediting (for the time being at least) all political groups which in any way bore responsibility for getting France into the war and then losing it once the conflict had started. This meant, in particular, discrediting of the Socialist and Communist parties and the organized labor movement, particularly the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT). The disillusionment of the workers in the old organizations seemed to open up possibilities for other political groups, among them (perhaps) the Trotskyists.

In the face of the really shattering events of May–June 1940, the two principal Trotskyist groups, that is, the ex-POI and the Molinierists of the ex-PCI, sought almost immediately to regroup and reorganize their forces. By August they were beginning to make some progress in this direction.

During July the group headed by Marcel Hic, Marcel Beaufrère and Paul Parisot, consisting of members of the POI who had refused to join Marceau Pivert's PSOP, made overtures for reunification with the POI "entrists" led by Ivan Craipeau, Marcel Gibelin, and Henri Souzin, who constituted the *Comités pour la IVe Internationale*. After some negotiations this reunification took place at the beginning of August.²⁴ A provisional executive consisting of Craipeau, Gibelin, and Souzin of the entrist group, and Hic, Beaufrère, and Rigaudias of the nonentrists, was established, and they kept the name *Comités Français pour la Quatrième Internationale*.²⁵

Ivan Craipeau and Marcel Hic sent a report to the International Secretariat of the Fourth International in New York right after the reunification. It was taken out of France by the American Trotskyist Sherry Mangan, the Paris correspondent for *Fortune* (under the name of Terence Phelan) and a former member of the International Secretariat who had been expelled from France by the occupation authorities.²⁶

In this report Craipeau and Hic said that the new group represented "(a) The return to the organization of elements which had been practically separated from us in the course of various crises; (b) the adherence to the new organization of the people gained by each of the currents during the war; (c) the definitive inclusion of a fraction from the PSOP." They went on to claim that "that signifies practically that in the course of the next several weeks we can organize in clandestinity from 7 to 800 militants, and from that base quickly develop the organization."²⁷

They reported that the new group was based on the principles of the Fourth International, and had called themselves "French Committee for the Fourth International" because they did not consider themselves a full-fledged revolutionary party and felt that the International was still really to be built. However, they asked the International Secretariat to recognize them as its French affiliate, and asked for financial aid and for help to get a few people whose lives were particularly in danger out of Europe.²⁸

For their part the Molinierists also regrouped. A number of militants who had escaped from prison or the armed forces or had been demobilized joined their comrades who had been active during the phony war period. Some of those leaders who had gone to Belgium a year before also returned to Paris. The technical work of maintaining and bringing back together the ex-PCI people was largely handled by Henri Molinier and Jeanne Martin des Pallières, the former companion of Raymond Molinier and then of Leon Sedov.

In July, a meeting of twelve ex-PCI leaders took place in the park of St.-Cloud. Soon thereafter they began to publish an information bulletin, largely for circulation among members of the ex-PCI group.²⁹

The Wartime La Verité

Soon after the reunification of the elements of the old POI they began to publish an un-

derground newspaper, *La Verité*. This was certainly one of the longest-lived and most remarkable of the clandestine periodicals published in France during World War II.

The first issue of the wartime *La Verité* appeared as a mimeographed sheet on August 31, 1940. It was identified under the masthead as a "Bolshevik-Leninist Organ." This first issue carried a lead article about the growing conflict between the reactionary and fascist elements operating in Paris and elsewhere in occupied France under German protection, and the Vichy government in unoccupied France. The second page was taken up with an article on the murder of Trotsky. The third page had a piece on the Vichy government's moves to destroy the labor movement and an article entitled "Down with Antisemitism!" On the fourth and final page was an article entitled "Our Plan."³⁰

La Verité appeared fitfully, sometimes every two weeks, at other times once a month. Its first six numbers continued to identify it as a "Bolshevik-Leninist Organ," then after two issues without any identification at all the tenth number, on March 15, 1941, proclaimed itself a "Revolutionary Communist Organ," which continued to be its designation until the first printed issue, number twenty, dated September 15, 1941, which identified itself as "the Central Organ of the Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale."³¹

With the transformation of the Comités into the Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste (IVe Internationale) once again, at the beginning of 1943, the periodical proclaimed itself "Organ of the Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste (IVe International)." ³² Finally, with the unification of most of the French Trotskyists in the reconstituted Parti Communiste Internationaliste (Section Française de la IVe Internationale) in March 1944, *La Verité* appeared as the "Central Organ" of that party until the end of the war.³³

All in all, seventy-seven numbers of the illegal *La Verité* appeared. The last few issues still had to be produced clandestinely,

even after the freeing of Paris from German occupation, because the de Gaulle government, which came to power with the liberation of France, for some months refused to permit the legal publication of the periodical. The last illegal number seems to have appeared on December 25, 1944.³⁴

The paper faithfully reflected the changing positions of the groups which published it. *La Verité* also reflected the conditions in France at the time: the increasingly bitter economic situation, the growing resistance movements of various kinds, the political machinations of both those elements associated with the occupying power and the Vichy regime and those aligned with the opposition to them.

In addition to *La Verité*, which was or at least aspired to be a "national" periodical, there appeared during the war a considerable number of local or regional Trotskyist publications of the various tendencies within the movement. This did not reflect the size or resources of French Trotskyism during this period as much as it did the great difficulties in communication and distribution of literature under German occupation. Most of these periodicals were of an ephemeral nature. Pluet-Déspatin has gathered an extensive annotated bibliography of these publications.³⁵

During much of 1941 there was in addition a version of *La Verité* published in New York by Jean van Heijenoort. Pluet-Déspatin has noted that "written in French, *La Verité* was destined for France, for franco-phone Europe, and the colonies. Thanks to the complicity of French sailors, *La Verité* reached France, smuggled inside American newspapers. From the free zone, where it arrived, it was sent clandestinely to the occupied zone."³⁶

Controversy Within the Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale

Between the Fall of France in May-June 1940 and the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 serious controversies

raged within both the *Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale* and the Molinierist group. They centered on the tactics and strategy which the Trotskyists should use in combatting the Nazi triumph and the consequences of this triumph in France and generally in Europe.

Within the CFQI the controversy tended to center on whether or not, because of the German conquest, France had been converted into an "oppressed nation." If that was in fact the case it was argued that it was necessary for all French classes to join together in the struggle against the Nazi oppressors.

The principal exponent of the idea that the CFQI ought to take a "national revolutionary" position in favor of unity of various classes in the country against the Nazi occupying force was Marcel Hic. He put forth a document, "Letter to the English Workers," arguing this line. Jean-Pierre Cassard sums up the content of this piece which, as a "thesis on the national question" was adopted unanimously by the Central Committee of the *Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale* on September 20, 1940, thus: "Nazi occupation has placed on the order of the day the struggle for national liberation, inseparable from the struggle for the socialist revolution. In this combat, the workers must find an ally in the petit bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie."

The thesis of September 20 was published in the CFQI's *Bulletin*. One passage proclaimed that "France has become an oppressed nation" and that the immediate issue was therefore "the right of peoples to dispose of themselves." It declared that in seeking to reestablish that right, the position of the *Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale* was that "it is to the French fraction of the bourgeoisie that we extend our hand."³⁷

The position put forth by Marcel Hic and his friends had little room for the traditional revolutionary defeatism which Trotskyists had favored. Rather, it involved support for

the British in the continuing struggle against Nazi Germany. A publication of the CFQI in February 1941 proclaimed that "the problem is to use and support in our own way the military struggle of English imperialism, the only means at the present stage of weakening the German military apparatus, the principal obstacle. For the English workers, this signifies abandonment of revolutionary defeatism."³⁸

That line was not as strongly reflected in *La Verité* as one might have expected. Although the paper frequently pointed out and criticized the subservience of the Vichy government to the German occupation forces and stressed the need for revitalizing the French economy so as to put the large part of the working class which was unemployed back to work, the articles in *La Verité* almost always called upon the workers to take the lead on their own in opening up the closed factories and putting them to work, seeking out available raw materials and taking other steps to put them back into operation. The newspaper frequently returned to the theme of the need for socialist revolution and the establishment of the United Socialist States of Europe as the only answer to the Nazi conquest of the continent.

On only two occasions between August 1940 and June 1941 have we found more or less frank appeals to French nationalism in *La Verité*. In the issue of October 1, 1940, the lead article was entitled "Only the French People Can Reconstruct France." It proclaimed that "the German army doesn't want to reorganize France. German imperialism doesn't want French industry to commence to function. Its interest . . . is to prevent the functioning of the least French institution. . . . It is upon the initiative of the people of France that the recovery of the country depends. . . ."³⁹

The second article making a "national revolutionary" appeal was one on the second page of the issue of January 1, 1941, dealing with the new "labor charter" the Vichy government was proposing to issue.

It argued that "all those who fight against the oppressor and who are not workers, must understand that the support of the working class forces is vitally necessary for the success of the struggle for national liberation."⁴⁰

There were within the CFQI elements who both wanted a stronger appeal to French nationalism than that proposed by Hic, and those who opposed such an appeal altogether. The former group, in fact, left the organization and established their own group in conjunction with non-Trotskyist elements; the latter continued to be an oppositionist element within the CFQI so long as the Comités Français continued to exist.

Jean Rous left the CFQI to join with some ex-members of the PSOP and other groups to form the Mouvement National Révolutionnaire (MNR). It published three issues of an illegal periodical, *La Révolution Française*, in July, August, and September 1940, and four numbers of another periodical, *Le Combat National Révolutionnaire*, between March and June 1941.⁴¹

Pluet-Désartin has synthesized the position of the MNR: The MNR is for a "true" socialism, "inserted in the French tradition and genius," in which production would center on a large nationalized and planned sector, which would be in the hands of "directing committees": those will be "directly derived from the world of work, organized in its professional categories, that is the workers, the employers who work, particularly the small and middle employers, the technicians, the artisans, the peasants." The MNR supports a strong, hierarchical state, in which the relations between various elements of the population will be established by "corporations." Hostile to the pseudo-democratic parliamentary regime, to totalitarianism and to racism, the MNR is favorable to the imperial unity of France and its national independence.

She notes that the MNR regarded the "collaboration" of the Vichy regime with the

Nazis as "a colonization of France by Germany." It advocated "strong resistance to Germany when it becomes oppressive," and that "it is necessary to profit from all blows struck by England against Germany, because 'in the conflicting contradictions of the new situation, there can begin to develop a policy of French liberation.'"⁴²

The MNR was dissolved by the German authorities in June 1941.⁴³

A third group of CFQI militants opposed entirely the nationalist orientation which the Comités had during the first year after the Fall of France. Headed by Marcel Gibelin, who resigned from the Central Committee of the CFQI, they formed the Internationalist Opposition within the Comités Français pour la IV^e Internationale. This group, set up in October–November 1940, opposed "what it considered to be the nationalist orientation" of the CFQI. The Internationalist Opposition continued in existence until the unification of most French Trotskyists in March 1944.⁴⁴

The Molinierists also were very critical of the alleged "nationalism" of the CFQI. As late as the congress of their group in January 1944 they adopted a long document criticizing that position.⁴⁵ However, Ernest Mandel, the Belgian Trotskyist leader, in an appendix to a book by Pierre Frank who at the time was associated with the Molinier group and in any case spent most of World War II in Great Britain, has concluded that, whatever nationalist ideological vagaries the CFQI engaged in 1940–41, they had little practical or lasting effect. He has written that "in fact it did not lead to anything in practice. Those who say that the French Trotskyists 'betrayed' by making a bloc with the bourgeoisie in 1940–41 do not understand the difference between the beginning of a theoretical mistake and an actual treacherous intervention in the class struggle. There was never any agreement with the bourgeoisie, never any support for them when it came to the point. . . . I think the comrades of the POI minority who fought against it did a good

job, and by 1942 it was reversed and did not come up again."⁴⁶

The Revisionism of Henri Molinier

The controversies within the Molinierist faction were of quite a different nature. They centered on different assessments of the degree of total victory which the Nazis had achieved in 1940, the probable duration of Nazi domination of France and of the rest of Europe, and consequently, the methods of struggle the Trotskyists should adopt vis-à-vis the victorious Nazis and the French regime and political movements which appeared in the wake of the Nazi victory.

Henri Molinier (who was also known as "Testu") was the principal advocate of a profound revision of traditional Trotskyist ideas (and consequently of strategy and tactics) in the face of the Nazi victory and its consequences. He put forth his ideas in a publication *Que Faire! (What To Do!)*, which appeared on August 28, 1940.

Henri Molinier began by arguing that the USSR had become a form of state capitalism, "which assimilated it with Nazi Germany, also characterized as state capitalist," according to Jean-Pierre Cassard. Molinier foresaw, furthermore, "the relative stabilization for a fairly long time, of fascist state capitalism."

Cassard has noted that "the analysis of Testu goes very far; he thinks that a new period has begun. The Fascist and Stalinist mass organizations are going to dominate the working class and the country. Within these movements exist anti-capitalist currents; it is necessary for the revolutionary militants to make them evolve towards the International, the proletarian revolution. 'Que Faire!' proposes therefore entrism within the fascist organizations, the PCF and its popular committees. This orientation has as a logical consequence the disappearance of all independent expression of the Trotskyists."⁴⁷

Controversy raged for years over what had

been the practical consequences of the line advocated by Testu. Jacqueline Fluet-Désptatin has extensively investigated this controversy. She has found unconvincing the charges from Stalinist and ex-Trotskyist sources that members of the Molinierist faction collaborated with the occupation authorities, held leadership positions in the fascist organization established by ex-Socialist Marcel Déat in 1941, or volunteered to join the French volunteer corps organized by Jacques Doriot and sent to fight with the German army on the Russian front. However, she does note that the European Secretariat of the Fourth International in March 1944 questioned the activities of Henri Molinier and Roger Foirier within the Déat group, the Rassemblement Nationale Populaire. She has noted, too, that the reunified Trotskyist party in its first congress in November 1944 set up a commission of inquiry on the subject and that even after the war the Parti Communiste Internationaliste felt called upon to issue officially an "explanation" of the affair.⁴⁸

Two associates of the Moliniers have borne witness to the fact that neither Henri Molinier nor Roger Foirier broke discipline of the Trotskyists or in any real way cooperated with the Nazis or with French "collaborators." These witnesses are Rodolphe Prager, who was a leading figure in the PCI underground, and Pierre Frank, Raymond Molinier's principal lieutenant in the 1930s and a major French Trotskyist leader in the postwar period.

Rodolphe Prager has noted that

The only two solutions for old militants known to the police were to go into illegality or obtain political cover. . . . Knowing that the clandestine life under the Gestapo was going to be very rude and difficult if it prolonged for several years, the organization decided to authorize the use of such strategems in a very exceptional situation. It was not a matter of compromising with Nazism, it was a ruse

of war which permitted these two comrades to 'cover' their intensive clandestine activity at the head of a Trotskyist organization. H. Molinier, in particular, concentrated on seeking the financial resources vital for a clandestine organization. The information gained in the collaboration centers was furthermore useful and transmitted to the Resistance. That has nothing in common with "entrism" or a French turn, involving no objective of carrying out political activities in that milieu, seeking only to provoke error by the class enemy.

Prager commented specifically on Roger Foirier. He noted that "the personality of Foirier was so little questioned that he was elected to the International Control Commission by the Second World Congress of the Fourth International in 1948."

Finally, Prager also dealt with the charge that some PCI people sought to recruit volunteers to join French elements fighting with the Nazis on the Russian front. He wrote that "this concerns a former member of the PCI, René Binet, leader of the Havre group, who had broken in December 1938 because of the entrism into the PSOF who, as a prisoner of war in Germany, turned from virulent anti-Stalinism to admiration of Nazism. As soon as we knew that he had become a fascist, we denounced him in our bulletin. I am not sure if he went to the Russian front, but he sought to recruit others. He led fascist groups in France after the war, and died rapidly."⁴⁹

Pierre Frank also bore witness to the continued loyalty of Molinier and Foirier to the Trotskyist movement. He noted that "independently of the particular analysis that each might make from one moment to another, both Henri Molinier and Roger Foirier—who more than once took risks in their existence—were always Trotskyist militants working loyally according to the decision of their organization and under its control."⁵⁰

In any case, there was a substantial element within the Molinier group which did not agree with the position of Testu. This opposition was particularly strong in the Marseilles region, but in the Paris area one of its principal spokesmen was Pierre Lambert. He wrote in the internal bulletin of the Molinier group in November 1940 that "the comrades say quite rightly that fascism is a capitalist expression. . . . For one thing, the violence of the struggle which will be greatly accentuated in the coming months will bring enormous destruction of productive forces which means, if I am not mistaken, economic regression. . . . With Germany victorious, Dr. Frank has already said to us that Europe will be converted into a source of supplies of raw materials, which is to say that we have the prospect for France of the destruction of national industries. Where are the progressive characteristics of that?"

Lambert ended his article saying, "the victory of fascism will only occur on the ruins of civilization. Lenin, and the Old Man recently, have said that unless there is the proletarian revolution there will be the return to barbarism, in this epoch in which the economic conditions are more than mature for the realization of socialism."⁵¹

French Trotskyism and the Nazi War on the Soviet Union

The Nazi attack on the Soviet Union on June 21, 1941, put an end to the ideological confusion within the ranks of the French Trotskyists. They returned to the orthodox view of the nature of the Soviet Union and the need to defend it against all attack and they saw the struggle of the USSR against the German invaders as part of the general struggle for socialist revolution in Europe and throughout the world. This return to Trotskyist orthodoxy took place both in the *Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale* and in the Molinier group.

The first issue of *La Verité* after the attack

on the USSR, dated June 25, 1941, was devoted exclusively to a statement of the CFQI on that event. After analyzing the causes of the attack, the statement said that "in all countries, starting now, the workers must organize to paralyze the Hitlerian aggression. . . ."52

The next issue of the CFQI periodical, dated August 1, consisted largely of an article entitled "It is Necessary to Defend the USSR." It started by asking "Why?" and among various answers to this, it said, "Because Hitler wants to profit from the perilous situation created for the USSR by the betrayals of the Stalinist bureaucracy to annihilate the Workers State, the planned economy, the collective property, to make the USSR a source of raw materials and labor, a market for the products of capitalist industry. Because Hitler can thus instill a new bit of life in dying capitalism . . . terminate the war and submerge in blood for many years all possibility of class struggle."

For the French Trotskyists the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union did not change the nature of the war between Germany and Great Britain (together with the United States, which they saw was soon to enter the conflict). *La Verité* wrote on December 5, 1941, "We have already said what we think of the war of Churchill. That war remains an imperialist war, that is to say, *anti-working-class*, even if Churchill defends the USSR."⁵³

Early in the conflict the editors of *La Verité* indicated what they thought ought to be the attitude of all workers towards the war against the Soviet Union. In the issue of October 15, 1941, they wrote that "it is necessary in the democratic countries to get started a proletarian program of aid to the USSR; to demand, by demonstrations and if necessary strikes, the immediate dispatch of all available war material; the railroaders, dockers, sailors must assure immediate transport; the workers in armament factories must demand full production, without profit, for the USSR. On all levels, with all

groups, this struggle can only make full sense as part of the simultaneous struggle for control of workers committees and the taking of power."

On the other hand, "in the countries under the fascist boot, everything must be done to undermine the offensive capacity of the Axis armies. But it is important to understand that this task cannot be carried out by methods of terror and individual sabotage. What is needed, is to organize the movement of large masses, that is, to prepare the revolution. . . . Furthermore, today to save the USSR it is necessary to put first the program of the world proletarian revolution. And to rally the working class in a unanimous bloc for the defense of the Workers State, it is necessary to return, in the USSR itself, to the revolutionary and Leninist methods. It is necessary to run out the organizers of defeat; it is necessary above all, at the front, in the rear, to rely on the initiative of the workers and peasant masses."⁵⁴

The French Trotskyists felt themselves part of the struggle going on in the Soviet Union. In a curious article in the December 4, 1941 issue of *La Verité* they claimed that "the voice of the oppositionists and the Trotskyists has made itself heard in Moscow, Leningrad, Irkutsk; it calls all the Soviet peoples and the proletarians of all the countries to the defense of the Workers State, for the defense of the conquests of October 1917." In another passage this article said that "it is because the Trotskyists die in Leningrad, Moscow, Rostov, Brussels, Paris and Nantes before the fascist enemy that we have the right to speak to the Communist militants. . . ."

In this same article *La Verité* even claimed that Jean van Heijenoort, the French Trotskyist who was then serving as secretary of the Fourth International in New York, had volunteered and been accepted for service in the Red Army.⁵⁵ Van Heijenoort has written about this report that "the information in *La Verité* is, of course, incorrect. Sometime in 1941 the Russian press

{*Pravda*!} published a short item [a few lines] stating that I had enlisted in the Red Army. I have never seen the item myself, but it was reported to me by various persons. This was perhaps a trick contrived by Stalin-Beria in order to rally some Trotskyists to the regime."⁵⁶

The Molinierist faction also rallied to the defense of the Soviet Union. A statement issued on June 28 and again on August 1, 1941, said of the USSR that "the liquidation of the political conquests doesn't change the fact that this economy, the way it is, represents for the working class and the entire world an inestimable value for the future struggles against capital and for the realization of Socialism. In this context, we are defenders of this economy."⁵⁷

For the French Trotskyists the defense of the Soviet Union was inextricably intertwined with the struggle for world revolution; the triumph of that revolution was inevitable, and that triumph would involve the overthrow of the Stalin regime. A typical statement of this point of view appeared in *La Verité* on July 25, 1942, in an article entitled "For the Revolutionary Defense of the Soviet Union." The writer said that "the proletarian revolution is on the march; in spite of all the obstacles that Stalin may accumulate in its way, it will triumph. The class struggle of workers of all countries, democratic or fascist, more than all the treaties, will assure a true defense of the Soviet Union. A victory of the revolution in Europe will definitively guarantee the USSR against all aggression. And as Stalin makes agreements once again with the enemy, with imperialism, he must know that the revolution will get rid of him and it will get rid of his friends of the white guard and the Churchills, at the same time as the Hitlers, Laval and Mussolinis."⁵⁸

Trotskyist Fraternization Efforts

The French Trotskyists believed firmly in carrying the message of the Fourth Interna-

tional to the Germans, both the workers back home and the German soldiers in France. A typical statement of their position appeared in *La Verité* on July 10, 1942, under the headline "Hand Extended to the German Workers!" This article said that the readers would see "in particular how criminal is the present policy of Stalinism, which claims that the German people are responsible for the present situation. They will see that our watchword 'Fraternization with the German workers, in green uniform or the 'blue' one of work,' is not a 'utopian' idea and that it is, on the contrary, the only realistic watchword, the watchword which, tomorrow, will be carried out in practice, for the socialist liberation of Europe."⁵⁹

The CFQR put their belief in fraternization into practice, specifically in Brest, in Brittany. The principal person in charge of this work was the German Martin Monat, who was then more generally known as "Victor" and was a member of the European Secretariat of the Fourth International. He worked very closely with two German Trotskyists, Paul and Clara Thalmann, and the center of the work was a seven-room house of the Thalmann's "which became a veritable tower of Babel."⁶⁰

The principal work of fraternization was carried out through a newspaper, *Arbeiter und Soldat*, edited by Monat and the Thalmanns. It was a mimeographed sheet which appeared in July, August, and September 1943. The first issue carried the subtitle "Organ for revolutionary proletarian ally," but the second and third numbers added "Fourth International" as further identification.⁶¹

The first issue of *Arbeiter und Soldat* consisted essentially of a long essay dealing with German history since World War I, the evolution and dissolution of the Comintern, the Spanish Civil War, and recent developments in Germany. The tone of the issue is perhaps best expressed in this statement, "It is with this process of destruction of fascist domination and all bourgeois domination,

in this work of sapping the capitalist war front, of reconstitution of the proletarian class front, of preparation of the Communist revolution that *Arbeiter und Soldat* aligns itself. Its tasks are therefore perfectly indicated."⁶²

The third issue of the paper began with a headline "We Want Defeat." The lead article said, "We wish the defeat of our capitalist class in this war. They are going to cry out, these gentlemen of industry, bank barons, all the Nazi bosses and the generals, all those who are still blinded and misled by them, and they will call us 'traitors to the fatherland' and 'agents of the enemy.' But we hold fast. We want the defeat of our capitalists. We prefer that to their victory."⁶³

In addition to *Arbeiter und Soldat*, the German soldiers working with the French Trotskyists put out several issues of a periodical of their own, *Zeitung für Soldat und Arbeiter in Westen*. Copies of only one issue seem to have survived. It, too, was mimeographed and was more "popular" than *Arbeiter und Soldat*, having cartoons and short news items and appeals for support for the Fourth International.⁶⁴

There were about fifteen German soldiers who worked with the French Trotskyists in the Brest area. They were engaged principally in surreptitiously distributing the periodicals. However, the Gestapo was soon able to break up the fraternization effort. On October 6, 1943, the Gestapo moved extensively against both the French Trotskyists and their German friends in Brest as well as conducting raids in Paris against the Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste (which the *CFQI* had by then become).

Although Martin Monat was able to escape that roundup, eleven other Breton Trotskyists were caught and four of them were killed. It was reported that fifteen German soldiers were executed at the same time, although this news was never officially published. In Paris a group of French Trotskyist leaders was also rounded up, including Marcel Hic and David Rousset, and

they were sent to concentration camps. Hic did not survive his concentration camp experience. One German soldier was also executed in Paris, after being tortured, because of his contacts with the Trotskyists.

This did not entirely end the work of collaboration of French Trotskyists with German soldiers. A new version of *Arbeiter und Soldat*, this time printed instead of mimeographed, began to appear in April 1944. It proclaimed itself the organ of the German Section of the Fourth International. Like its predecessor, this journal was edited by Martin Monat. Monat was arrested by the Gestapo about a month before the capture of Paris by Allied troops and was never seen by his friends again. His arrest ended the second *Arbeiter und Soldat*.⁶⁵

Organizational Evolution of French Trotskyists

From its establishment in August 1940 the *Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale* had assigned particular tasks to its major leaders. Marcel Hic and Ivan Craipeau were the editorial committee of *La Verité*; a trade union commission was directed by Henri Souzin. David Rousset was charged principally with intelligence work, facilitated by the fact that he was employed in the Vichy Ministry of Information. Other leaders had other specific tasks.⁶⁶

For the first two years one of the most important activities of the *CFQI* was to maintain contacts with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States and the Fourth International headquarters in New York. This was achieved through the Marseilles organization of the *CFQI*, led by Albert Demazière, members of which were in contact with *SWP* members working in the United States merchant marine who visited the French port periodically. Some of the Marseilles Trotskyists were also associated with a local office of the International Rescue Committee of the U.S.A., which was principally engaged in providing relief for left-

wing political leaders in unoccupied France and facilitating their getting visas for entry into the United States.

In June 1942 the Vichy police closed down the International Rescue Committee operation, and at the same time rounded up most of the leaders of the Marseilles Trotskyist group, including Demazière. For many years thereafter there were widespread questions about the possible role in those police actions of Michel Kokoszinski, a CRQI member and employee of the International Rescue Committee, who turned up at the end of the war as a member of the Communist Party. The question of whether or not Kokoszinski had betrayed his associates was not even adequately resolved by a "tribunal of honor" which studied the question as late as 1965.⁶⁷

In April 1942 the Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale changed its name to Comités Français de la IVe Internationale, a change which was reflected on the masthead of *La Verité* in its issue of April 10, 1942 and thereafter.⁶⁸ Jean Pierre Cassard has noted concerning this change that even before their contacts with the International headquarters were severed they "ceased to consider that they were working for the IVth International. Rather, they affirmed that through their activity the IVth International was very much alive in the heart of the second world conflict. They were the French Committees of the IVth International."⁶⁹

On December 26-27, 1942, the Central Committee of the group held a plenary session "in a city of France" in which there took part "representatives of all the essential sectors of the organization." This meeting, which was reported in the January 15, 1943 issue of *La Verité*, made several important decisions. One was to issue a call for the formation of a "workers front" composed of "the most class conscious of the workers: syndicalist militants, Trotskyist militants, Communist militants, anarchists, former secretaries of enterprise trade union sections, former workshop delegates, combatants of June '36, combatants of November

'38, youths trained in the hard school of illegality."

The meeting authorized the Central Committee to issue a letter of invitation "to workers organizations for the creation of a Workers Front." It agreed that organizations should be formed "in factory, enterprise, neighborhoods" while simultaneous efforts would be made to launch such a front on a national basis.

Another major decision of the December 1942 meeting was to change the name back to Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste (4e Internationale), saying that this did not mean that "the party of the revolution is definitively constituted." On the contrary, the meeting instructed the Central Committee "to redouble efforts . . . in reinforcing the links among the workers vanguard, to permit the whole proletariat to engage victoriously in the struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe and of the World."⁷⁰

In pursuance of this proposal a special (mimeographed) issue of *La Verité* was published on April 25, 1943, consisting only of an Open Letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party urging establishment of a Workers Front. It expressed willingness to have the "popular committees" being established by the Communists as a basis for this front. The letter ended "Long Live the Workers Front! Long Live the Communist Revolution! Bolshevik Greetings."⁷¹

In June 1943 the POI held what it called its Fifth Congress. *La Verité* devoted its July 9 issue entirely to this meeting. It reported that the congress was attended by "an important number of delegates from all regions of the country."

La Verité reported two documents adopted by the POI's Fifth Congress. One was a manifesto "to the Workers of France," the second one dealt with the workers front. The manifesto declared that "the hour of the Revolution has sounded," and warned against "the reactionary plan of Wall Street and The City." It concluded by asserting that "more than ever, the emancipation of

the workers can only be the work of the workers themselves. . . . It must carry on the combat on its own ground, that of class action, with its own methods, those of the class struggle. . . ."⁷²

While the PCI was being reestablished, the Molinierists were likewise working to revive their prewar organization. At the same time both groups were inching toward the general reunification of French Trotskyism. With the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union steps were taken to heal the split which had developed within the Molinier ranks as a result of the policy advocated by Henri Molinier. The opponents of the line of Testu were particularly concentrated in unoccupied France, centered on Marseilles. There they had continued to use the name Parti Communiste Internationaliste. After June 21, 1941, they were joined in their opposition by most of the leadership of the group in the Paris area. One consequence was the retirement of Henri Molinier from the leadership.⁷³

In January 1942 the Molinier group was reorganized. A provisional political bureau was chosen, and it was decided to issue a monthly theoretical journal, *La Seule Voie*. It was also agreed to establish "cells" of not more than five members each to carry on the rank and file organizational work. These were to exercise discipline over their members, dropping those from membership who in fact were not active. Each cell was to issue its own agitational periodical for distribution among workers.

The *La Seule Voie* group held what they called a preconference in February 1943. This decided to adopt the name Comité Communist Internationaliste (CCI), to issue a new monthly periodical, *Le Soviet*, and to number its first issue 157, to indicate its continuity with the prewar PCI publication, *La Commune*. At the same time *La Seule Voie* would continue to be published as the CCI's theoretical organ. Steps were taken to reestablish contact with ex-PCI elements in the unoccupied zone with whom contacts had been broken.⁷⁴

The preconference of the CCI also adopted a resolution calling for the establishment of Workers Groups (Groupes Ouvrières—GO). Jean-Pierre Cassard has explained the concept behind the GO. "The GO is a rudimentary but progressive form of reorganization of the class for combat . . . the GO regroups the most consequent elements in the factory to carry on clandestine combat in the enterprise, to organize resistance to deportation, to employer and governmental maneuvers, to express and defend workers demands, to present problems on the basis of class and channel the best people into Communist activity."

Cassard noted that the leaders of the CCI were never able to decide whether the GO were embryonic soviets or underground trade unions. He noted that usually where they were really established they tended toward the latter alternative and ultimately were absorbed by the unions of the CGT.⁷⁵

Finally, the preconference of the CCI adopted a political resolution entitled "Americanism Against Bolshevism," which Cassard attributed to "the youth and political inexperience of the group."⁷⁶ He summed up the essence of this resolution thus: "the USA liquidating the USSR liquidates Stalinism, the USA liquidating Germany opens the world revolution. The world revolution open, it is the hour of the IVth International."

Cassard cited a passage from the resolution: "The attack of the USA on the USSR will open the civil war. It is the crumbling of German imperialism which will set off the world revolution. The committees and the soviets will appear from the first days of combat. It will be the victory in Germany or its crumbling everywhere, power to the Soviets in Berlin or barbarism in the world. . . . The proletariat will seek new cadres, a new organization, a new program, it will be the hour of the IVth International."⁷⁷

This resolution provoked a schism within the CCI. A minority led by Henri Molinier, the Spaniard Font-Farran, and Pierre Lambert, saw it as extremely sectarian and lead-

ing to mistaken positions on concrete issues. One of these was the uprising of Italian workers in March 1943, creating revolutionary conditions which were only suppressed by Nazi troops. The majority of the CCI executive claimed that this uprising was "within the struggle of American imperialism against the USSR." The minority, on the other hand, proclaimed it to be "a first eruption of the masses," which the Trotskyists should support.⁷⁸

In January 1944 the CCI held its first and only congress. The leadership presented a recapitulation of the group's activities since April 1943; three issues of *Le Soviet* published, forty throwaways, four issues of *La Seule Voie*. The congress also expelled the principal figures in the minority: Henri Molinier, Font-Farran and Lambert, who promptly joined the POI. The meeting also established the CCI's conditions for Trotskyist unity, which included continuation of *La Seule Voie* as a factional organ within the unified party and equality with the POI in its leadership.⁷⁹

Reunification of French Trotskyism

The European Secretariat of the Fourth International, which had been functioning since 1942, used its good offices to bring about the unification of the various groups in France professing loyalty to Trotskyism. There were four of these: the Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste (with its majority and the International Opposition minority), the CCI (also with a majority and minority faction), the October Group, and the Lutte de Classes group.

The October Group was a new faction. It owed its inspiration to Henri Molinier, who had been principally responsible for organizing it among a group of non-Trotskyists to whom he had lectured extensively on Marxism and Trotskyism and had won over to the ideas of the Fourth International. Jean-Pierre Cassard concluded that Molinier organized this group outside of existing Trotskyist factions as a bargaining pawn in the

unity negotiations. In December 1943 it was invited to meet with the POI, CCI and European Secretariat in negotiations for French Trotskyist unity and it accepted the invitation and became part of the European Secretariat.⁸⁰

The Lutte de Classes group was quite different. It had been established in 1939 by Barta and held itself to be the only true Trotskyist element in France. It was the only one which stayed out of the unity achieved in February 1944.⁸¹

The first overtures toward reunification took place during the first half of 1942. In April, the La Seule Voie group wrote a letter to the Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale suggesting establishment of a liaison committee between the two organizations. The Comités responded favorably.⁸² Subsequently each organization had fraternal delegates at the other's national congress.

The European congress organized by the European Secretariat in February 1944 brought to conclusion the process of French unification. It set a time limit of one month for its achievement and decreed that there should be a Central Committee of three from the POI, two from the CCI, one from the October Group plus Michel Raptis (Pablo) of the European Secretariat. The new group took the name Parti Communiste Internationaliste which the European Congress decided that all European sections should adopt.⁸³

The March 25, 1944, issue of *La Vérité*, the first to carry the identification "Organe Central du Parti Communiste Internationaliste," carried the "Declaration of Unity" of the three groups establishing the new party and a lead editorial, "It is Necessary to Build the Revolutionary Party." This editorial ended, "The moment has come to forge in action the revolutionary party, to make it a powerful instrument of the working class. That is the understanding of the three organizations which unite today in the Parti Communiste Internationaliste. At the decisive turning point of the second world war, the IVth International is at its post of com-

bat, keeping high and firm the flag of the revolution."⁸⁴

The new PCI held its first congress in December 1944. Since the de Gaulle government had not legalized the party the meeting had to be held in semilegal circumstances. It was reported in *La Verité* of December 25 that "a sufficient number of delegates had been arranged for to permit all tendencies to express themselves completely. . . ." *La Verité* also said that the new Central Committee elected at the congress "represents all the tendencies which have expressed themselves."

The congress adopted a "plan of action." It included "a plan of reconstruction elaborated by the CGT, applied under control of the workers committees, nationalization without indemnity or purchase of the banks and trusts; government of the PS, PC, CGT; armament of the people, workers militia; international unity of action of the proletarians."⁸⁵

The Lutte de Classes Group

We have noted the breakaway of the group led by David Korner (Barta) from the Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale right at the beginning of World War II. According to Jean-Pierre Cassard the dissidence of the Barta group had begun as a consequence of the formal establishment of the Fourth International in September 1938, which it had opposed.⁸⁶

The Barta group itself explained its break with the Comités by the charge that the Comités Français pour la IVe Internationale "is limited to a petty bourgeois milieu where organizational practices are social democratic and not communist."⁸⁷ Once established it directed its recruiting efforts principally towards disillusioned members of the Communist Party, disoriented by the Stalin-Nazi Pact and the resulting 180 degree turn in the policies of the French Communist Party.

The Barta group began publishing a periodical, *L'Ouvrier*, three issues of which ap-

peared. It proclaimed itself a Marxist-Leninist organ. After the last number of *L'Ouvrier* early in 1940 the group gave no evidence of its existence until November of that year.

The Barta faction strongly opposed the nationalist turn of the Comités Français after the Fall of France. That position, it proclaimed, "constitutes a betrayal of the class struggle and a weakening of the struggle against national oppression."⁸⁸

On October 15, 1942, the Barta group began to publish a new periodical, *La Lutte de Classes*, and from then on it was generally known by the name of its periodical. It was at first included in preparations for unifying French Trotskyism. A letter addressed to them by the POI and the CCI on December 10, 1943 recognized that the Barta group "is entirely on the terrain of Trotskyism," and invited the group to "clarify its political positions and end its isolation from the organizations of the IVth International in France."

The *La Lutte de Classes* group replied to this invitation on December 16. According to Jean-Pierre Cassard, "the group claimed to have broken all contacts with the past of the IVth International in France, to be able to construct the revolutionary section of the IVth International. . . ."

A further letter from the Barta group to the unity committee of the French Trotskyists attacked the POI and CCI as "petty bourgeois organizations incapable of constructing the revolutionary party," and refused to have anything more to do with the unification efforts.⁸⁹

La Lutte de Classes thus continued its separate existence. It recruited a number of young people and continued to publish its paper. They began particularly to carry on agitation among factory workers and for a short while after the war had considerable influence among the autoworkers of the Paris region, leading a strike at the Renault company.⁹⁰

Unlike the case of the PCI and *La Verité*, the Lutte de Classes group did not seek legalization of its paper by the de Gaulle govern-

ment in 1944. It argued that such legal recognition would constitute "compromising those who wish really to struggle against imperialist war with the authorization and under the control of bourgeois censorship."⁹¹

The French Resistance

Organized opposition to German occupation forces was slow in developing in France. In fact, elements which were later to be among key factors in the Resistance at first sought to collaborate with the Germans. The Communist Party, for instance, sent Maurice Treand to Gestapo headquarters seeking legalization of the party newspaper *L'Humanité*. When he was then arrested by French police, he was freed on orders of the German authorities.⁹²

In the beginning, opposition to the Germans found expression mainly in violent attacks on individual German soldiers and more or less spontaneous demonstrations. Thus, a German sentry was killed in Weinecurt a few days after the French surrender,⁹³ and on November 11, 1940, a group of a few hundred students marched down the Champs-Élysées singing the *Marseillaise* and chanting slogans against Hitler to commemorate the Armistice Day of World War I.⁹⁴

It was not until the Germans began to round up hundreds of thousands of French workers to work in German industry and on farms that massive resistance began. Werner Rings has noted that "the war had already been decided, and the Battle of Stalingrad was over" before major organized underground struggle against the Germans began. "In May 1943, Commander in Chief West reported for the first time that 'armed guerrilla bands' five hundred strong had formed in the Department of Corrèze. These consisted of deserters from the labor service—parties of men who had evaded conscription by taking to the woods without military organization and equipment. It was not until the summer of 1943 that German situation

reports from France spoke of Resistance groups run on quasi-military lines, 'some wearing a variety of uniforms, others identified by armbands.'⁹⁵

Ultimately three groups emerged in the Resistance: "the 'United Resistance Movements' (MUR), the purely military 'Army Resistance Organization' (ONA), and the Communist 'French Irregulars and Partisans' (PTP), all of which officially merged early in February 1944. Having been formed . . . the 'French Forces of the Interior' (FFI) were then restructured like a proper army with national, regional, and department command centers and twelve military districts subordinate to a general staff."⁹⁶

The Stalinists had a major role in the Resistance. Werner Rings has noted that "the Communists secured a majority on the Departmental Liberation Committees and also gained control of the Military Committee of the 'National Resistance Council' (CNR) formed in the Spring of 1943." This role of the Stalinists was due "not only to efficiency, discipline, and fanatical self-sacrifice, but also to the Soviet Union's reputation, among Communists and non-Communists alike, as the premier Resistance power."⁹⁷

Trotskyists in the Resistance

Because of their small numbers, weak organization and internal divisions, the Trotskyists could not play more than an exceedingly modest role in the Resistance. They were further hindered in trying to capitalize on the fight against the Nazi invaders and the Nazis' French collaborators by their ideological position, which misinterpreted the nature of the struggle: they insisted on seeing it primarily as a class struggle and the first act in the proletarian revolution in France, Europe and the world as a whole rather than as a national struggle against the German conquerors.

Before unification of the POI and the CCI the former had carried on propaganda for the "workers front" and the latter for the

"workers groups." These both seemed to be conceived of as having the combined role of presenting the workers' immediate demands in their plants and factories and serving as nuclei for revolutionary soviets which would obtain arms and seize power with the collapse of the German occupation. After unification, the Parti Communiste Internationaliste used both "workers front" and "workers groups" interchangeably or even together, but the concept of them had not changed.

The Trotskyists continually presented their prescription for socialist revolution in *La Verité* and their other publications. Typical is what appeared in *La Verité* on April 29, 1944, about six weeks before the Allied landings in Normandy. This editorial argued that:⁹⁸

The preparation of the workers for armed struggle is the order of the day. Each conscientious worker must seek to procure arms, munitions. But most essential is the direction, the organization of the struggle. For that, it is necessary at present to form in the factories, quarries, mines, clandestine *Workers Groups* of 3 to 4 sure comrades which will prepare the struggle for demands in the enterprise and undertake at the same time the preparation of the armed struggle. Courage, heroism are not sufficient for this struggle. It must be understood that the proletariat never struggles on equal terms with the forces of the bourgeoisie. The power of the proletariat resides above all in its mass, in its unity, in its cohesion. It is only based on those qualities that the armed struggle can have effective value. The armed struggle will always be important separate from the mass of the proletariat. It is for that reason that this task does not devolve on special groups which come into existence in isolation from the proletarian masses, but are part of the general tasks of the *Workers Groups* and should be carried out only by them.

The struggle of the *Workers Groups*

which will confront the national front and the fronts of the imperialisms with the *Workers Front*, is part of the preparation of the factory committees and the soviets whose hour will soon sound.

In a special issue of May 1944 *La Verité* had a lead article attacking the call of the Algiers-based Committee of National Liberation of Charles De Gaulle for a national uprising with the coming opening of the Second Front in France. It charged that among other things the "national insurrection" called for by De Gaulle was designed "to prevent the rising of German soldiers against their officers, and the union of revolutionary German soldiers with the workers of the occupied countries."

Rather, this article said, the Trotskyists "call on the workers to struggle for themselves to conquer bread, freedom, peace. Only the working class allied with the peasant workers and intellectual workers, can assure bread by the planned and socialist organization of production, only it can assure freedom by the powers of the workers and peasants committees, the soviets, only it can assure peace by installing the United Socialist Soviet States of Europe and the World."⁹⁹

The special issue of *La Verité* of August 11, 1944, put out when the Allies were approaching Paris, was in the form of a two-sided throwaway of the P.C.I. It called for support of a general strike it claimed the underground C.G.R. had called. On the back side, under the heading "So that the defeat of Hitler is the victory of the workers," the paper launched the slogans: "Open the prisons and the camps! Arm yourselves! Form your *Workers Militias* in enterprises and neighborhoods! Occupy your enterprises! Elect your delegates as in June '36!"

At the bottom of the second page of this issue were two short passages to "Deutsche Soldaten" and "Allied Soldiers." The latter read (in English): "We want to overthrow capitalism and take the power for the working class. This our struggle is yours too. It's

the only way to help English and American workers, to win best wages for them and you. Don't break our struggles. Don't shoot at us! LONG LIFE TO INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD! LONG LIFE TO THE SHOP AND SOLDIERS COMMITTEE! LONG LIFE TO SOCIALIST PEACE!"¹⁰⁰

The August 21, 1944, issue of *La Verité* carried an open letter of the PCF to the French Communist Party and the Socialist Party. It urged a pact of "unity of workers action."¹⁰¹ There is no indication that either of the large parties took any notice of this "letter."

Clearly, the French Trotskyists regarded the "maquis" as being merely supplementary to the principal resistance struggle, which they saw as being in the factories and other workplaces. They in no way regarded the Allied troops which landed in Normandy as "liberators," but rather as an army seeking to supplant one imperialism for another insofar as France and Europe in general were concerned.

René Dazy has noted the very limited success, and ultimate failure, of the Trotskyists in their efforts to organize embryonic soviets. He has written that "After the 17 of August, following the Liberation of Paris, worker committees were born in the Jumo factories at B.M.W. of Argenteuil, where the Trotskyists had good positions. The movement included several dozen enterprises of the Parisian region. . . . The majority of these committees were confused with trade union committees, that is, the CGT. Some were directed by the Trotskyists who gave leadership to an Interenterprise Committee and an Inter-militia Liaison Committee of forty factories, large and small of the Western suburbs. Those committees, spontaneously arising from the rank and file, had a scent of sovietism. . . . Thus the PCF and CGT dedicated themselves to restraining the powers of the factory committees to finally make them play only the simple role of enterprise committees which the law of 22 February 1945 officialized."¹⁰²

Some Trotskyists also participated in the armed Resistance. In doing so, however,

they were clearly faced with disagreeable alternatives. The part of the Resistance run by professional military men had little attraction for them, and the more "popular" parts of the maquis were usually dominated by Communists, and this meant that the Trotskyists either had to hide their own true beliefs and feelings or run the risk of being eliminated physically by the Communist leadership of the guerrilla groups.¹⁰³

Rodolphe Prager has explained the attitude of the Trotskyists toward the Resistance and their relationship to it. He wrote that "the Trotskyists opposed the Popular Front, the strongest reason why they could not join the National Resistance Front which included groups from the most reactionary to the parties of the left and supported the cause of the Allied imperialists. . . . Practical agreements were, on the other hand, conceivable and took various forms, on the local and national level. They concerned exchanges of information and practical aid."

Prager added that "in addition, the comrades participated on an individual basis in the organizations of the Resistance, either because they had lost contact with the Trotskyists, or in accord with the Trotskyist organizations. These comrades generally had to hide their quality as Trotskyists, particularly when they worked in organizations under Stalinist influence where their lives would have been in danger. But I repeat, during the occupation that was not a subject of debate. . . ."¹⁰⁴

Trotskyist Martyrs

For a very small group, the French Trotskyists suffered very severe casualties during World War II. A more or less official list of their dead contains thirty-four names. These include leading figures in the movement, such as Henri Molinier, killed in the fighting for Paris in 1944, and Marcel Hic, murdered in a German concentration camp.

In addition to those murdered, at least another twenty-five members of the French

Trotskyist movement were sent to German concentration camps, and another fifty or more Trotskyists were jailed for longer or shorter periods between 1939 and 1944.

Both major French factions suffered casualties. As the larger of the two, the POI was more severely affected. It has been noted that "The POI underwent four repressive waves of particular severity: that of the leadership in the Southern Zone (Tresso, Demazière, Bloch, Sadek, etc.), that of August 1942 in the Parisian region (Corvin, Barthelmy, Thielen), that of 6 October 1943 affecting simultaneously the leadership of the party (Hic, Rousset, Filiatre) and the Breton region (Cruau, Baufrère, Trevien, Berthomé, Bodenes, etc.) and the last, in March 1944 (Maruse and Renée Laval, Marguerite Metayer, Pauline Kargeman, etc.)."¹⁰⁵

Nor were all of these people victims of the Nazis. The Stalinists on occasion were equal to the Nazis in their persecution and elimination of Trotskyists. The most notorious case of suspected Stalinist liquidation of Trotskyists was that of Pietro Tresso (an Italian Trotskyist aligned with the POI), Jean Reboul, Maurice Segel, and Abraham Sadek. The first two had been arrested along with Albert Demazière by the Vichy authorities when they broke up the POI organization in Marseilles, the other two had been arrested at other times.

All five of these Trotskyists ended up at the prison at Puy-en-Velay. On the night of October 1-2, 1943, that prison was raided by a maquis group and all the political prisoners were liberated. The five Trotskyists were part of a group which joined the maquis camp at Wedli. There they were segregated and subjected to "quarantine" by the Stalinist leaders of the maquis. A few days later Albert Demazière was sent with two other men on a food search mission, and Demazière ended up in Paris, where he rejoined his Trotskyist comrades.

The other four Trotskyists at the Wadli camp were never heard of again. After the

war the Trotskyists tried vainly to ascertain what had happened to them. René Dazy has summed up the results of this inquiry: "We have in this history a good example of the conspiracy of silence. Four suspects under surveillance and submitted to forced labor before the eyes of all disappeared without leaving a trace, and seventy men closed their eyes to the circumstances of their disappearance. As the photos of leaders made victims of purges are erased, four people were erased from their memories. . . ."¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

At the end of the Second World War most of the French Trotskyists were reunited in a new Parti Communiste Internationaliste. United, they still amounted to no more than a few hundred dedicated people. They had been totally unable to convert the international war into a civil war as their doctrine called for. Quite contrary to their own expectations, not they, but the traditional Socialist and Communist parties, emerged as the major organizations of the Left, and the Trotskyists remained at best a fringe group.

French Trotskyism: From PCI to New PCI

During the four decades following World War II French Trotskyism suffered from even more splits than it had experienced in its earlier years. By the early 1980s there were three major Trotskyist organizations in France and several minor ones.

During those decades, too, the French movement experienced alternating periods of success and failure in terms of membership and influence, ranging from being close to extinction during the 1950s to being a group of significance on the far left of French politics at other periods. By the early 1980s French Trotskyism constituted an element of recognized although still small influence in organized labor, and of major importance in the student movement. One of the three principal French Trotskyist parties was by then one of the largest organizations in International Trotskyism.

The Immediate Postwar Years

French Trotskyism emerged from the Second World War with two rival organizations. The larger of these was the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI), the FR's French affiliate which had regrouped forces belonging to the Fourth International during World War II. The other group was Voix Ouvrière, to which we shall devote separate attention.

During the last couple years of the war the Trotskyists had expected a "revolutionary wave" to come after the conflict and had expected that they would be able to grasp the leadership of that process. Events disappointed the Trotskyists' hopes. The great mass of workers turned back to the "traditional" left parties, that is the Socialists and Communists, for leadership, rather than to the Trotskyists. Furthermore, the "revolu-

tion" did not take place, the Communist Party playing a particularly significant role in dampening whatever revolutionary aspirations certain groups of workers might have had.

The first major activity of the PCI in the months following the liberation of Paris was a campaign to get the de Gaulle government to legalize the appearance of the party's newspaper, *La Verité*, which for a considerable period was prevented by Communist influence in the government. Many years later one Trotskyist writer was to note that "for the first time, and in spite of inadequacies, the party mobilized for a common objective. All of the organs of the party behaved more or less well, but all carrying out the tasks assigned to them. Above all, in this campaign, the PCI joined the presentations to the minister with a mass campaign. Petitions circulated. In spite of Stalinist and police repression the members sold *La Verité* Sunday after Sunday. By its action the party forced, at the end of 1945, the legalization of *La Verité*."¹ However, this same writer noted that after this concentrated effort the Parti Communiste Internationaliste suffered a crisis. Without such a clear-cut immediate objective its organization ceased to function as effectively, its publications appeared tardily, and it became increasingly hard to collect dues from the members.²

However, the Trade Union Commission of the PCI was particularly active in the immediate postwar years. Working-class members of the PCI had pockets of strength in a few unions, and even where the party had no members the Trade Union Commission tried to assure a presence in strikes and other activities through the distribution of literature.

Trotskyists of the PCI were active in one of the first postwar strikes, that of the employees of the social security system in July 1945. Their prominence in the walkout of Paris printing trades workers in January 1946 was sufficient to bring a denunciation of them from A. Croizat, then a Communist

Party member of the de Gaulle government. During that strike the PCI paper *La Verité*, which backed the walkout, was the only periodical the strikers would allow to appear.³

It has been noted that the PCI Trotskyists "were present in the post office strike of August 1946, in the combats of Labour printing workers, the Rateau factory, in the first movement 'for bread' in Nantes." The PCI trade unionists also played a role at the time of the Renault strike in May 1947 although the rival Voix Ouvrière group was more important in that walkout. The PCI pushed unsuccessfully to convert the Renault walkout into a general strike of metal workers.⁴

The Trotskyists of the PCI were also active in the widespread strikes of November–December 1947. Some four million workers, including teachers, metalworkers, miners, white-collar workers, and railroaders went on strike. Both groups of Trotskyists were active in the strike in the Renault factories, but the Communists who controlled the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), with which the Renault workers were affiliated, used the strike to break the influence of the Trotskyists in that union.⁵

At the time of the split in the CGT in December 1947, with the formation of the Socialist-controlled CGT-Force Ouvrière, the Trotskyists of the PCI urged reunification of the confederation. They established "Unité Syndicale" at a conference in Paris in February 1948 which "proposed to struggle for trade union unity, organizing groups of militants inside each labor union, as well as 'committees of interunion coordination.' Their program: meeting of an extraordinary congress of reconstruction of a single CGT, democratic reform of the reunited CGT, establishment of a platform of demands." The new group began issuing a periodical, *Unité Syndicale*.⁶

In 1950 a new periodical, *L'Unité*, succeeded *Unité Syndicale*, which had not appeared for several months. Jacqueline Pluet-

Despatins has noted that "it is the organ of a broad group, without distinction of trade union affiliation, in which the militants of the PCI played a preponderant role. Unlike *Unité Syndicale*, it no longer put accent on immediate reunification of the CGT but rather on the lesser tactic for the immediate future: unity of action." The efforts of the PCI trade unionists were greatly hampered when in May 1951 twenty-one members, including Pierre Lambert, Stéphane Just, and Yves Bellas, were expelled from the CGT.⁷

During the immediate postwar years the Parti Communiste Internationaliste also conducted electoral activity. At the time of the elections for a constituent assembly in November 1945, they ran candidates in Paris and Isère, receiving a total of 10,817 votes.⁸

The PCI also participated in the general elections of June 1, 1946. They ran seventy-nine candidates in eleven different locations, and received 44,906 votes out of a total of 3,240,744 in the constituencies where they had nominees.⁹

Campaigns on international issues were another important PCI activity. It was the only party to protest against massacres of Algerian nationalists in May 1945. It also opposed the de Gaulle government's plans for reconquest of Indochina, declaring its support for the full independence of the Indochinese peoples and demanding the withdrawal of French troops. In this connection it helped to organize a branch of the Vietnamese Trotskyist party in France after the Vietnamese Stalinists had murdered most of the Trotskyist leaders in that country.¹⁰

Desertions and Early Splits

A number of important figures who had been in the Trotskyist movement before and during World War II did not continue in its ranks in the postwar period. Pierre Naville and Gerard Rosenthal joined the Socialist

Party, in which they were active for some time.¹¹

Another serious early defection from the PCI was that of David Rousset. In October 1945 he drew up a document entitled "Propositions for a new Appreciation of the International Situation," in which he wrote "our programmatic base, which was essentially made up of the first four congresses of the Communist International, and the work of Trotsky on Stalinist centrism, corresponds to a political experience, to a level of revolutionary struggles in the world which, today, has been completely modified." He also argued that in the Third World War, which he regarded as inevitable, the Soviet Union would be forced to take the leadership in the world socialist revolution, a theme which was to be adopted a few years later by other leaders of the PCI, and by the Secretary of the Fourth International, Michel Pablo (Raptis).¹² Rousset was soon expelled from the PCI. Other prewar French Trotskyists who abandoned the movement about the same time were Gilles Martinet, Henri Claud, and the economist Charles Bettelheim (who returned to the Communist Party, whence he had originally come).¹³

New divisions soon appeared among those people who remained in the Trotskyist movement. By the time of the Third Congress of the PCI in September 1946, there were three evident tendencies in the organization. The "rightists" were led by Laurent Schwartz, who had been particularly active in the party during the war; the center by Pierre Frank; and the "leftists" by Chaulieu. Each of these groups had sharply differing points of view.

The so-called leftists raised the old issue which had brought a split in the Trotskyist movement of the United States at the beginning of World War II: the "nature" of the Soviet Union. "They defined the Stalinist bureaucracy as a class, and saw, in the Communist parties of the world, the elements of this new social class in formation. . . . It was not a parasite caste. It had become a class

and so had a historic mission to fulfill, which sentimentally Chaulieu and his comrades condemned."¹⁴ The leftists were eliminated from the PCI.

The rightists, on the other hand, without questioning any of the basic ideological tenets of Trotskyism, had obvious doubts whether the strategy of trying to make the existing PCI the center of the French revolutionary movement was correct. A motion introduced by one of the rightist leaders, Ivan Craipeau, was submitted to the Second Congress of the PCI in February 1946. It called for building the revolutionary party "through grouping together the progressive tendencies which develop in the PCF and the PS." The motion was defeated by a vote of twenty-four against, three in favor, and forty-seven abstentions.¹⁵

In the Third Congress of the PCI, in September 1946, Craipeau became secretary general of the organization, and for a short while the orientation which he had proposed served as at least the party's unofficial position.¹⁶ Ever since 1944 Ivan Craipeau (apparently without specific authorization of the rest of the leadership of the PCI) had directed the efforts of a handful of Trotskyists who worked within the Jeunesse Socialiste (JS), the youth organization of the Socialist Party. One of these became secretary of the JS organization in the Department of the Seine, while another became secretary in charge of doctrinal education of the JS. Both were on the executive committee of the organization.¹⁷ After the Socialist Party officially dissolved the Jeunesse Socialiste, its secretary general, Marcel Rousseau, joined the Parti Communist Internationaliste.¹⁸

At the next congress of the PCI, in November 1947, Ivan Craipeau and his faction were defeated by the "centrists," headed by Pierre Frank and Marcel Bleibtreu.¹⁹ At the same time a motion supported by the Craipeaux faction was defeated. It urged "a plan of penetration of our forces in the JS, Action Socialiste Révolutionnaire, la Ba-

taille Socialiste, the periodical *Franc-Tireur*, which publishes 250,000 copies, *Revue Internationale*. . . ." This document went on to urge "the discussion with those who wish to form, keeping the closest and most fraternal contact with the revolutionary elements of the labor movement, a vast organization of all the live forces of the people for the development of a real force and to convoke a national conference of all the workers currents repudiating both Stalinism and the third force, to construct a new labor movement, even if the PCI is rejected as such an organization."¹⁹

Without leaving the PCI the rightists joined with a number of intellectuals, including David Rousset, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus to establish the *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire* (RDR). However, this association soon brought the expulsion of the PCI rightists from the Trotskyist movement.²⁰

This expulsion was confirmed at the Second Congress of the Fourth International early in 1948. A resolution of that congress provided that the expelled members of the French section could be reintegrated into it only if they accepted the decisions of the Second World Congress, accepted the line of the PCI majority on building a revolutionary party, worked under the direct control of the International Secretariat, and "abstained rigorously" from publicly attacking the PCI.²¹

The centrist group, which represented the majority of the PCI, based its position on expressions of continued loyalty to the Transitional Program of the Founding Congress of the Fourth International. For the moment at least, it rejected both any questioning of the positions which Leon Trotsky had put forth in the Transitional Program and other documents, and any idea that Trotskyism in France could be expanded by joining forces with nonparty leftist intellectuals or with Stalinist sympathizers.²² However, before long there would be an even more serious split in the 1948 majority of the PCI.

Meanwhile, the French Trotskyists were faced with the unexpected but very welcome split between the Tito regime in Yugoslavia and Stalin. They reacted to that break with great enthusiasm. Pierre Frank, who had just become secretary general of the *Parti Communiste Internationaliste*, wrote that "A Stalinist party which breaks with Moscow ceases to be a Stalinist party, even if it keeps the Stalinist internal regime, methods of thought and slogans." He also suggested that the Yugoslav Communist Party "is in the process of reconstructing Trotskyism in a fragmentary fashion and without an overall vision, but dealing with the most important questions."²³

For some time the French Trotskyites cultivated relations with the Yugoslav regime and its embassy in Paris. During the summer of 1950 they organized French youth work groups to go to Yugoslavia to help out on a variety of projects.²⁴ An Association of Brigades in Yugoslavia was organized, which for about a year and a half published a periodical, *La Brigade*.²⁵ However, when the Yugoslav delegation to the United Nations voted in favor of the resolution condemning the North Korean invasion of South Korea, the French Trotskyists turned strongly against the Tito regime.²⁶

The 1952 Split in the PCI

The French Trotskyists were the first to react negatively to the ideas which the secretary of the Fourth International, Michel Pablo, began to develop soon after the outbreak of the Korean War, which involved a violent change in Trotskyist strategy and ultimately led to a schism in the Fourth International. As one French Trotskyist source has noted, "This occurred not because the PCI had the most 'clairvoyant' members, but because the International Secretariat was located in Paris, and the French militants were able to follow very concretely the liquidating consequences of the policy of Pablo."²⁷

The positions adopted by Pablo between

1950 and 1952 are dealt with more extensively elsewhere in this volume. Here it is enough to note that he saw the outbreak of the Korean War as having begun a process of war and revolution to culminate in the Third World War which he saw as occurring very soon. He drew from this analysis the conclusion that the Trotskyists did not have time to build up the "party of the world revolution" as they had been attempting to do since 1938. He therefore called for a new strategy of "entrism" into the socialist or communist parties of each country, depending on which of these two was the predominant working-class political element. But this was to be a new kind of "entrism sui generis," which would be of very long duration and have as its objective gaining the leadership of the tendencies, particularly within the communist parties which, he argued, would be forced by the long-lasting cycle of war and revolution to take the lead in bringing about the world socialist revolution.

Insofar as France was concerned, this meant that the Trotskyists should orient themselves toward entering and becoming very active in not only the faction of the labor movement controlled by the Communists (the *Confédération Général du Travail*—CGR), and the many front groups which the Communist Party controlled, but also entering the Communist Party itself. When Pablo first began to put forward these ideas, virtually the whole of the PCI leadership opposed them. However, very shortly a number of the principal party leaders went over to Pablo's point of view, and there began a bitter and long-drawn-out factional fight which ultimately split the party and came near to destroying French Trotskyism.

The conflict began at the Ninth Plenum of the Secretariat of the Fourth International in November 1950, where Pablo presented the first version of his newly evolving view. At that meeting Pierre Frank and Privas, another French member of the International Secretariat (IS), raised serious questions about Pablo's position, as did the Belgian Ernest Mandel.

Right after the Ninth Plenum there was a meeting of the Central Committee of the PCI. George Clarke, who represented Pablo at that meeting, violently attacked Frank and Privas, and the French Central Committee refused to approve the Pablo document.

At another French Central Committee meeting in January 1951 Mandel, Privas, and Frank reported that Pablo had threatened their expulsion from the IS. Subsequently, Pablo did succeed in getting Privas removed from the Political Bureau of the IS, as a result of which he, Pablo, suddenly had a majority in that body which favored his point of view. He demanded that Frank and Mandel also come around to his way of thinking or face exclusion from the International Secretariat.²⁸

Under this pressure from Pablo, Frank and Privas as well as Ernest Mandel changed their positions and began to support Pablo's ideas, which they had until then opposed. Pierre Frank was reported to have answered someone who questioned him about his apostasy, "What do you wish? As for me, I have my baton as a marshal. I cannot accept being thrown out of the International Secretariat."²⁹

The change in position of Frank, Privas, and some others meant the division of the PCI party leadership into a majority which still remained highly critical of the Pablo point of view, and a minority, led by Frank and Privas, who now supported it. At first the Labor Commission of the party hesitated about getting involved in the factional dispute. Although they opposed the position of Pablo, they initially held back from joining in a formal anti-Pablo faction within the PCI.³⁰ Undoubtedly, the factor which made them decide to participate actively in the struggle was their knowledge that, as recognized Trotskyists in the various unions in which they were active they would under no circumstances be able to join the Communist ranks. Pierre Lambert was the head of the Labor Commission. Once he and his associates joined the anti-Pablo faction, that faction had a strong majority.³¹

There was an open conflict between the two groups at a PCI Central Committee meeting in April 1951, which was attended by Pablo, who violently attacked the leaders of the majority.³² Pierre Frank also spoke out against the majority. Both the majority and minority presented documents on the party's trade union work, its youth activities, and organizational problems.

Subsequently, in May 1951 the majority of the Central Committee of the PCI adopted a document, "Ten Theses on Stalinism," which had originally been drawn up by Ernest Mandel before he joined Pablo's camp and proposed to submit it to the upcoming Third World Congress of the Fourth International. Marcel Bleibtreu, who was at that point the chief spokesman for the majority, issued a document "Where Is Comrade Pablo Going?," replying to "Where Are We Going?," a document Pablo had issued outlining his new position.³³

At the Third World Congress a special French Commission functioned, to pass on the situation in the French section. At that meeting Pablo and his allies engaged in an energetic series of attacks on the French majority. However, no change in the French leadership was decreed.³⁴

The majority of the PCI agreed to submit to the discipline of the International and to try to undertake the "entrism sui generis." Its interpretation of what this meant differed strongly from that of Pablo and his supporters, however. This difference in approach was shown in two documents of the time.

A resolution of the Political Bureau of the PCI on March 31, 1952, stated the position of the majority. It said that "The concrete form of this orientation can only be a combination of independent work and of entrism work within the Stalinist organizations or organizations in the control of the Stalinists. . . . There is no question whatever of liquidating Trotskyism as an independent tendency in the workers political movement; on the contrary, a correct understanding of the situation can permit us to play an important role in the months to come. But what is involved

is to understand that the independent organization should above all aid the entrism work by speaking in a language addressed essentially to the communist workers, and that the entrism work will broaden in scope as the war approaches."³⁵

The position of Pablo and his allies was reflected in a letter which Mandel sent to the PCI majority group. It said that "whatever the decisions of the Eighth Congress of the party, the line to be applied after the Congress will be that of 'entrism sui generis'; the division of the party into three sectors, one sector immediately realizing the entry, a second modifying its activity to be able to activate the entrism turn within the near future, a third continuing independent work. This regroupment of the party required the revision of all sectors of activity. . . . At the same time, it guarantees the continuation of independent work, with *La Vérité* and other organs, with its trade union activity and its own youth work, with its recruitment and the satisfying of all its inherent needs."³⁶

Although the difference in these two orientations may seem one of emphasis, that difference was of major significance to the two factions. For the PCI majority major emphasis in the party's work was to continue to be the independent activities of the party itself, with certain selected people attempting to "enter" the Communist ranks. With the Pablo people, the major emphasis of the party was to be on entering the ranks of the Communist Party and organizations under the Communists' control.

The final stages in the dispute were the "suspension" in January 1952 of the majority of the members of the PCI Central Committee and Political Bureau by Pablo in his capacity as head of the "world party of the socialist revolution"; the acceptance in March 1952 by the PCI majority of a temporary Political Bureau in which Ernest Mandel, representing the International Secretariat had the casting vote; then the suspension of Pierre Frank and other minority members by the majority of the PCI Central Commit-

tee. Two separate "eighth congresses" of the PCI were then organized by the majority and minority factions.³⁷

At the time of the split the Parti Communiste Internationaliste had about 150 members. Of these, a few more than one hundred reportedly stayed with the majority, and about thirty went with the minority. The rest presumably dropped out altogether.³⁸

French Trotskyism After the 1952 Split

The fifteen years following the 1952 split witnessed the near disappearance of French Trotskyism. The division of the already tiny PCI left neither group able for many years to carry on more than exceedingly modest propaganda work.

The group which attempted seriously to carry out the Pablo-type of "entrism sui generis" fared very badly. One commentator from the anti-Pablo group noted many years later that "some militants, at the price of the most repugnant statements, were integrated into the PCF and became its most zealous servants, prisoners of their own renegacy."³⁹ A few others who at first succeeded in entering the Communist ranks were soon expelled as "troublemakers."⁴⁰

In the one area in which the PCI Trotskyists had a modicum of influence in the unions before 1952, and where they attempted "entrism sui generis," the results were disastrous. This was in Brest, where the Trotskyists had participated in leadership of an important strike in 1950, but where the Trotskyist group totally disappeared after entry into the Communist ranks.⁴¹

The majority PCI, which had opposed Pablo's policies, did only marginally better than its rival during the years following the split. By 1958 its membership had fallen from about one hundred to only fifty.⁴² Furthermore, the organization was transformed in the 1952-1956 period from a party (at least

in embryo) to what they themselves admitted was a "group."

This change in the nature of the organization was described thus by the ex-majority PCI group itself many years later: "After the split, the Trotskyist fraction no longer functioned as an organization, it was reduced by the force of circumstances, to a 'group' in which the old nucleus took the place of all organization in training the militants, in the accomplishment of tasks, the political line defined on its own responsibility, with a minimum of control by the militants. It could not be otherwise: it was only at this price that the essential factor could be preserved: the continuance of militant Trotskyism in France."⁴³

However, in spite of their small number and very limited resources, the ex-majority of the PCI (who came to be known as the Lambertists) continued to be active in organized labor. Years later they described these activities thus: "After the general strike of August 1953, in September-October 1953 at Nantes, Bordeaux in 1957 . . . in the movement of public employees, in the banks (July 1957) . . . among the Parisian metalworkers, and among the teachers, the Trotskyists are present, participating, analyzing. . ."⁴⁴

They were also active in other fields. They participated in the Action Committee of Intellectuals Against the Algerian War, which opposed the French attempt to suppress the revolt of Algerian nationalists. However, in the Algerian struggle they committed what they later recognized as being a major error.

The Lambert group particularly supported the Mouvement Nationaliste Algérien (MNA), which had begun the struggle for Algerian independence but was later superseded by the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), the ultimate winners in the struggle for independence. The Lambert group worked within the MNA but did not push for its conversion into a "Marxist vanguard."⁴⁵

The strong stand of the Lambertist PCI against the Algerian War brought retaliation from the French government. François Mitterrand, then minister of interior in the ad-

ministration of Pierre Mendès-France, banned the circulation of the party's paper *La Verité* in Algeria late in 1954 and opened an "investigation" of the paper in Paris. The minister apparently found two articles, "It is better to die than to live on one's knees," and "Trial of Sorcery in Oudjda," in numbers 344 and 345 of the paper to be particularly offensive.⁴⁶

During this period the Lambertists also continued to play a role in International Trotskyism. When the Socialist Workers Party of the United States finally broke with Pablo and the International Secretariat early in 1953, the Lambertists became the French section of the rival International Committee, which was organized under the leadership of the swp.⁴⁷

Until 1958 the Lambertist group continued to publish *La Verité* as a weekly paper. In October of that year it was converted into a monthly magazine "which corresponded to the real situation of the Trotskyist forces. . . ." ⁴⁸ Two years later they also began to issue a mimeographed weekly, *Informations Ouvrières*, which "thus initiated a patient effort to rally forces which permitted the recruitment of the first group of militants, 'friends' or readers through whom a class policy enlarged its influence."

In the spring of 1961 they also made their first effort to work once more among students. A handful of Trotskyists joined with others to establish the Liaison Committee of Revolutionary Students, "the activity of which, very modest at first, was to grow quickly as the working class recovered the terrain conquered by the bourgeoisie" with the advent of de Gaulle to power once more.⁴⁹

In February 1964 the Lambert group was able to convert their mimeographed bulletin *Informations Ouvrières* into a monthly printed newspaper. It had a subtitle, "Open forum of the class struggle." Many years later it was reported that this periodical had become "the organizing center of the vanguard. . . ." ⁵⁰

Early in 1964 the Lambertist group was able, together with the Lutte de Classes Trotskyist group and some independents, to organize a group of trade unionists in Nantes, who issued in March a so-called "Call of Nantes," seeking to get all trade union groups to unite in a common struggle against the French bourgeoisie. Later, the Lambertists were to argue that this was a first step in labor developments which culminated in the May-June 1968 general strike which almost overthrew the de Gaulle regime.⁵¹

At the end of 1964 the Lambertist group held its Thirteenth Congress. At this meeting it sought to "begin the march towards an organization, to free itself from the politics of a group . . . to undertake the unique role it had of winning over the vanguard workers element."⁵² Further efforts were being made among the students. A mimeographed student bulletin *Révoltés* was launched, around which efforts to establish a youth organization were conducted.⁵³

The cci-pci

At their Fourteenth Congress in December 1965 the Lambertists took the name Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI), which they were to keep for nearly two decades. Many years later they explained what they had conceived to be the significance of the assumption of a new name: "This political act was of extreme importance; far from being motivated by the formal desire for an 'appellation,' it corresponded to the reality of the forces of French Trotskyism, to the recognition of an important stage on the way to the construction of the party in connection with the tasks of reconstruction of the IV International."⁵⁴

The newly named organization continued its activities among both students and workers. The *Révoltés* youth group helped to organize a meeting in June 1967 attended by 1,000 young people "to organize political action against the bourgeoisie, its govern-

ment and its State." It also organized international demonstrations with its British counterpart, Young Socialists. In April 1968 the organization within which the OCI youth were active, the Comité de Liaison des Etudiants Révolutionnaires (CLER), took the name Fédération des Etudiants Révolutionnaires (FER).⁵⁵ It was involved in a situation in which student discontent was rising rapidly.

In the labor movement the OCI sought to stimulate the revival of labor militancy in the mid-1960s after the defeats it had suffered following the return of de Gaulle to power in 1958. The OCI also attempted to foment unity among the various groups into which French trade unionism was then divided. Its members participated in a number of strikes and demonstrations.⁵⁶

The OCI also had its first experiment with electoral action. In the parliamentary elections of March 1967 it ran one candidate in a heavily Communist district. Although no information is available on how well the OCI nominee did, his campaign was based on "the perspective of the class united front, against the policy of class collaboration baptised 'union of the Left.'" ⁵⁷

Both student and worker discontent culminated in the student-labor general strike of May-June 1968 which almost toppled the de Gaulle government. Subsequently, the OCI claimed credit for converting what began as a student movement into a workers uprising. They maintained that "in the first hours of the morning of May 14, 1968, the general strike called at Sud-Aviation in Nantes under the leadership of the Trotskyists announced the general strike of May-June 1968 which opened a new historic period in the international class struggle. . . ."⁵⁸

During the May-June 1968 general strike the OCI stressed the need to form a united strike committee of all of the country's labor organizations. They saw the situation as being prerevolutionary and felt that such a strike committee could convert what had

begun as an economic walkout into a movement to seize control of the State. Other political elements of the left, particularly the Communist Party, did not share these objectives, and the Communists were able to keep the movement oriented purely toward economic demands and ultimately to defuse the situation.⁵⁹

The events of 1968 brought about the outlawing of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste by the de Gaulle government. They continued to function as the Comités d'Alliance Ouvrière (CAO).⁶⁰

Following the events of May-June 1968 the youth organization of the Lambertist faction of French Trotskyism played a particularly important role. Early in March 1969 they organized the first conference of the Alliance des Jeunes pour la Socialisme (AJS) in Paris, attended by 400 delegates who were said to represent "several thousand members throughout France." The group was headed by Charles Berg. The conference was addressed by François de Masset of the CAO and a delegate from the British Young Socialists.⁶¹

At the time of a meeting organized in February 1970 by the AJS in one of the biggest halls in Paris, attended by an estimated 8,000 young people, the organization claimed that it had four thousand members of whom about half were reported as being "active." They included not only secondary and university students, but workers in such plants as Renault, Michelin, Nord-Aviation, Sud-Aviation, the post office, and the social security system. The AJS was reported to be "particularly established in the Paris region, Clermont-Ferrand, Nantes, and in Dijon."⁶² The AJS was publishing a regular periodical, *Jeune Révolutionnaire*.⁶³

The AJS held its second congress in November 1971, at which it was reported to have a membership of 6,000 and an annual budget of 3 million francs. *Le Monde* commented that "few political organizations of youth can be compared with it." The AJS had a national committee of 230 members, two-

thirds of whom were in the provinces, and a national bureau of twenty-five, all living in Paris.⁶⁴

The AJS and the OCI (which was legalized again in 1970) were active on a number of issues. These included demonstrations against suppression of civil liberties in Czechoslovakia and protests against the War in Vietnam.⁶⁵

During the early 1970s the OCI published and distributed a number of pamphlets dealing with various aspects of the party's program. There were publications in opposition to the popular front (at the time of the campaign of the Unity of the Left coalition in 1973)⁶⁶; a historical one on *Stalinism—Degeneration of the USSR and of the Communist International*⁶⁷; and one on *The United Labor Front and the Construction of the Revolutionary Party*.⁶⁸

The OCI also conducted electoral activities. In the 1973 parliamentary campaign, after first negotiating with the other two Trotskyist groups; the Ligue Communiste and Lutte Ouvrière, it finally decided to run nineteen candidates of its own and to urge their supporters in other constituencies to vote for "recognized workers' organizations," meaning particularly the Communist and Socialist parties.⁶⁹ In the 1974 presidential election the OCI called for a first-round vote for François Mitterrand, the Socialist leader who was running as the candidate of the Union of the Left—consisting of the Socialists, Communists, and the Left Radical Party.⁷⁰

In the municipal elections of 1977 the OCI joined with the other two Trotskyist groups in signing a "pact of alliance" and running joint slates of candidates in various parts of the country. This document summed up the alliance's program under four headings: "1. Develop the Possibilities of Workers Control," "2. Support the Struggles of the Workers and Toiling Populace," "3. Defense and Extension of Democratic Rights," and "4. Change the Conditions of Life."⁷¹

In the parliamentary election of 1978 the OCI again joined with the LCR and LO, this

time to put up two-hundred-fifty candidates in the first round under the slogan "For Socialism, for Power to the Workers." They urged their supporters to vote for Socialist or Communist candidates in the second round, in each case supporting the nominee more likely to win.⁷²

In the 1981 presidential election the OCI again called for a first-round vote for Mitterrand, the Union of the Left nominee. However, in doing so it issued a statement saying that "it is necessary to destroy the bourgeois State, establish the power of the councils, construct the workers State, expropriate capital. . . . It is impossible to march ahead if one fears to march towards socialism." Finally the OCI statement urged "the construction of an authentic party of the working class."⁷³

In 1983 the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (which name the OCI had reassumed) organized "workers' unity" lists of candidates for municipal elections. They won a handful of seats on municipal councils in several different parts of the country.⁷⁴ Then in 1984, at the time of the European elections, the PCI organized a convention attended not only by members of their own party but also by Socialists and Communists, disillusioned in the Mitterrand government of the Union of the Left, and independents. It endorsed a "workers' and peasants' unity list" of eighty candidates, the great majority of whom were in their twenties and thirties and included metalworkers, white-collar employees, and teachers.⁷⁵ The list received 182,320 votes.⁷⁶

The lists supported by the PCI in the 1984 election received about 0.91 percent of the total votes cast, about half as many as were obtained by the other avowedly Trotskyist ticket, that of Lutte Ouvrière. However, one not-too-friendly commentator observed that the party's vote had fallen substantially in the heavily industrialized and working-class Paris region, as compared with the previous European parliamentary elections in 1979.⁷⁷

By the early 1980s the PCI was undoubt-

edly the largest Trotskyist party in France and one of the two or three largest in the world. It claimed 7,000 members in 1982.⁷⁸ In September 1980 the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste had merged with a faction of the rival Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, said to number between 400 and 500 members, which had split from the LCR at the time the followers of Nahuel Moreno had quit the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in 1979.⁷⁹ They formed the United OCI.⁸⁰ Shortly afterward, the party's name was changed to Parti Communiste Internationaliste.

By the early 1980s the PCI was active within the Communist-controlled Confédération Générale du Travail, and the Socialist-oriented Force Ouvrière. They refused to work within the Confédération Française Démocratique des Travailleurs, which was Catholic in origin but aligned with the Socialist Party, on the grounds that it was "Church-controlled."

It was often difficult for Trotskyists to work within the CGT, and the PCI people were forced to do so surreptitiously in many cases. However, by 1982 they claimed to have at least some influence in the metal-workers', chemical workers', and social security workers' unions of the CGT.⁸¹

The PCI could work much more openly in the Force Ouvrière. Officials of that organization admitted in 1982 that the PCI had some influence in local FO organizations but denied that they had any major strength within the organization.⁸²

The PCI was one of the two major political groups with influence in the student movement by the early 1980s. Until 1968 the Communists had controlled the Union Nationale des Étudiants Français (UNEF), the country's principal student organization. However, their role in dampening down the student-worker uprising of May-June 1968 tended to discredit the Communist Party among the students, with the result that the OCI-PCI was able to win control of the organization. The Communists thereupon split the UNEF, and by the early 1980s there

existed the UNEF Réorganisé, controlled by the Communists and the UNEF Indépendant et Démocratique, led by the PCI but in which the Socialists were active. In student elections the UNEF Indépendant et Démocratique usually won over its rival, but not without a struggle.⁸³

The political situation after the advent of the Mitterrand government to power in 1981 was a difficult one for the PCI. For one thing, they had supported Mitterrand on both the first and second ballots. For another, the workers tended at first to strongly support the Socialist president. The PCI's problem was one of organizing opposition to the policies of the Mitterrand government without cutting themselves off from the workers whose support they were trying to win. Nearly three years after the Mitterrand government took office the leaders of the PCI felt that they had succeeded in this task.⁸⁴

After the Mitterrand government began an "austerity" program in mid-1982, the PCI's criticism of the government became increasingly intense. In December 1982 it organized a demonstration in Paris which it claimed was attended by 20,000 people. This was followed by a "national conference of political groups constituted on the initiative of the PCI." The theme of this conference was "Socialist-Communist deputies, respect the mandate of the people!" This conference insisted that "it is necessary to change course." It urged an end to wage freezes, a law prohibiting further laying off of workers, an end to the austerity budget, and support for freezing workers' rents.⁸⁵

The PCI widely distributed leaflets condemning the Mitterrand government's policies. A typical one was entitled "Another Policy," and its headlines read "Freezing of wages, increasing unemployment, freezing of hospital budgets, the policy of Delors applied against the workers. Another Policy is Needed!"⁸⁶

Another leaflet, labeled a supplement to the party newspaper *Informations Ouvrières*, was addressed particularly to the steel workers. It opposed the government's

program to rationalize the steel industry in Lorraine, which was resulting in layoff of 20,000 workers.⁸⁷

A PCI document of July 10, 1982, directed "to the responsible cell leaders," recounted the party's activities between June 4 and July 7. These included a series of meetings in Paris and provincial cities on June 4, a demonstration against visiting U.S. President Ronald Reagan on June 5, demonstrations on June 13 in various cities for liberation of the imprisoned leaders of Polish Solidarity, a meeting of a steelworkers' delegation with an official of the president's staff, the sending of letters and telegrams to Mitterrand against steel layoffs, and a meeting on June 16 against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

The same document indicated the basic orientation of the PCI. It stated that "the working class keeps its forces intact. The PCI, taking the line of rupture with the bourgeoisie, keeps the whole initiative of carrying out a tactic seeking . . . to aid the working masses to themselves bring about the revolutionary crisis. We are at the beginning of a turn-about; it is necessary then to precisely discern . . . the first steps of this turn-about, to follow with all the inflexibility necessary the combat required for the construction of the revolutionary party. . . ."⁸⁸

International Affiliation of OCI-PCI

As has been noted earlier, the majority group of the post-World War II Parti Communiste Internationaliste was expelled from the Fourth International in 1952. When in the following year the International Committee of the Fourth International was established under the aegis of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, the PCI became the French section of that group. However, when the SWP took the lead in attempting to reunite the two factions of International Trotskyism the Lambertists opposed this effort. They felt that reunification was being suggested on the wrong basis, that before the two interna-

tional groups were reunited there should be a thorough discussion of the factors which had brought about the original division in the ranks of International Trotskyism. Otherwise there would be only a papering over of old differences which would lead to further splits in the future.⁸⁹

The Lambertists joined forces with the British Socialist Labor League, headed by Gerry Healy, to maintain in existence the International Committee of the Fourth International. They played a leading role in the one full-fledged conference held by the International Committee in London in 1966. At that meeting they got the delegates to accept at least formally the OCI position that the original Fourth International had in fact ceased to exist, and had to be "reconstructed."

In 1971-72 a split developed between the OCI and its British counterpart. As a result, the British group and its allies continued to use the title of the International Committee, whereas the OCI and the groups associated with it established the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI).

In the early 1970s CORQI had very few affiliates apart from the OCI. At least in part because of this the French group developed some interest in possibly joining forces with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. This possibility seemed to be reinforced by the serious split which then existed within USEC between the major European affiliates and the Socialist Workers Party and its allies.⁹⁰ The OCI and SWP particularly shared their attitude toward the Portuguese Revolution, strongly opposing the USEC majority's support for the Portuguese Communist Party's alliance with the Movimento das Forças Armadas (MFA) military group.⁹¹

By 1977 the overtures between the OCI and the SWP had broken off. However, early in 1979 the OCI again undertook negotiations with the United Secretariat, these discussions ending after the split in USEC at the

end of the year resulted in the exit of many of USEC's Latin American affiliates under the leadership of the Argentine, Nahuel Moreno.

For about a year, from late 1979, the forces led by OCI formed an alliance with the Moreno group. When that liaison broke down, the OCI fully revived the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (COROI).

Conclusion

By the early 1980s the group which had begun as the majority faction of the postwar Parti Communiste Internationaliste was undoubtedly the largest and strongest Trotskyist organization in France. It controlled the largest segment of the student movement and probably had the most influence in the labor movement of the three principal Trotskyist groups. It was also the center of one of the three principal tendencies in International Trotskyism.

French Trotskyism: The 1952 PCI Minority and Its Heirs; Lutte Ouvrière and Other French Trotskyist Groups

The faction which had constituted the minority of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste before the split in 1952 continued to function under the PCI name for more than a decade and a half after the division of the party. It remained affiliated with the International Secretariat (IS) headed by Michel Pablo, and then in 1963 joined with the majority of the IS in reuniting with the Socialist Workers Party and some other affiliates of the International Committee to establish the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. PCI leader Pierre Frank was one of the principal figures in both the International Secretariat and the United Secretariat.

The Frank PCI published from August 1952 on a periodical of its own, *La Verité des Travailleurs*, which at first was a monthly and then a bimonthly.¹ Ten years later, in 1962, the name of the publication was changed to *L'Internationale* "to end the confusion with *La Verité*." Then, at its Eighteenth Congress, in October 1965, the Frank PCI once more decided to change the name of its periodical, to *Quatrième Internationale*.²

Although, as we have already noted, the PCI had very little success in infiltrating its members into the Communist Party (PCF) and lost most of those who were able to enter the PCF, they did do somewhat better with another experiment in "entrism" which they started in the 1950s. Left-wing elements of the Socialist Party broke away to form first the Autonomous Socialist Party

(PSA) and then the United Socialist Party (PSU), and at least some of the Pierre Frank Trotskyists entered that group. One of them, Rodolphe Prager, was elected to the Central Committee of the PSU, although it was well known that he was a Trotskyist. He remained active in the PSU until the 1969 presidential election campaign, when he was expelled for publicly supporting the Trotskyist nominee Alain Krivine instead of the PSU candidate Michel Rocard.³

The Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire

During the 1950s the Pierre Frank PCI remained a tiny organization. It was not until the early 1960s that the party began to make some headway, gaining some influence in the Communist Youth, particularly in the Communist student organization of the University of Paris.

The Paris newspaper *Le Monde* later described how Alain Krivine, a leader of the Union des Étudiants Communistes (UEC), and a number of his associates were won over to Trotskyism: "In 1962, as the secretary of the history section of the UEC, he founded the Front Universitaire Antifasciste which confronted the OAS groups [right-wing extremist] in the Latin Quarter and elsewhere. . . . In 1963 a meeting in Paris with the Belgian Trotskyist leader Ernest Mandel brought him definitively under Trotskyist influence. . . . But it was not until two years later that Krivine was expelled from the Communist party. After having 'submerged' himself, along with his comrades, in the left wing of the UEC for two years and conducting a fight at the 1965 UEC congress for the 'right of tendencies' and 'real de-Stalinization of the French CP,' he was expelled from the party in January 1966."⁴

Krivine and his followers then organized the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire (JCR). During the following two years they

centered their activities on protests against the Vietnam War.

It was in the student uprising of May–June 1968 that Alain Krivine and the JCR achieved wide national and even international attention. In an interview after the uprising, Krivine described the role of the JCR in those events. "From the start, the JCR fully integrated itself in the movement, even though we were aware that the forms the student movement was taking were extremely provisional. We realized that these forms, that is, the antileadership, spontaneity-worshipping, sometimes anarchist aspect of the movement, could not last without threatening to get the student struggle bogged down. But we thought that the movement would develop as a result of the students' experience and by our posing political problems and the need for political organization."⁵

The Paris newspaper *Le Monde* subsequently indicated the key role the JCR had played in the student movement of May–June 1968. It said that "the JCR, which had the most numerous cadres, played a role of mobilization and inspiration which the specialists judged decisive. It was it, notably, which furnished the UNEF the marshals for the principal demonstrations. . . ." ⁶ Krivine indicated what the JCR had gained from its role in the 1968 student uprising. He said that "in Paris, for example, the JCR doubled its membership during the May–June mobilization and it was the same in many provincial cities. But aside from this very intensive recruitment, what was much more important for us was the hearing we were able to get before thousands, tens of thousands of youths. This means that when classes resume we will be the strongest left political organization in the high schools and universities. . . ." ⁷

Not only the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire, but also the PCI was active in the May–June 1968 events. Pierre Frank commented that "this is indicated by the daily bulletins and leaflets. I don't think we

made any mistakes on the political line and day-to-day tactical problems. Our activity, of course, was limited by our forces. The roneo was turning day and night. But that doesn't carry very far when you have a movement of ten million people on strike in the factories . . . we are accused along with other 'groupuscules' of being responsible for the movement. We'd be very proud if that was so because if we had been in charge it would have finished in another way."⁸

The PCI strongly condemned the Communist Party's attempts to dampen the rebellion. A bulletin of the PCI condemned the negotiations of the Communist-controlled CGT to end the workers' general strike. It claimed that "the workers will reject" the CGT's efforts. "They will strengthen the unity of action between the workers and students. . . . Forward against the Gaullist Regime. For a Workers Government."⁹

After the end of the May-June 1968 revolt the de Gaulle government outlawed both the JCR and the PCI. On this occasion Pierre Frank commented that "we are studying the legal aspects of the measure and are reserving our right to challenge it. We are confident that many labor and civil liberties organizations will speak up against the dissolution measures taken by the government against a series of vanguard organizations, and will struggle against these decrees until they are abrogated. In any case, the Trotskyists, who have undergone many repressions before, will emerge from this attack stronger than ever."¹⁰

The Ligue Communiste

In April 1969 the PCI-JCR Trotskyists, who had in the meantime been publishing a newspaper, *Rouge*, established a new organization, the Ligue Communiste (LC). There were 300 delegates at the founding congress of the LC, and "the congress divided into a majority of 80 percent and a minority of 20 percent. The minority was divided into two

tendencies. One could be characterized as 'Maoist-spontaneist,' the other as centrist." The minority was given representation on the Central Committee of the LC, which was described as "a highly centralized organization capable of assuming the historical task when the foreseeable class struggles next break out in the continuing crisis of the French and international bourgeoisie." It was decided to affiliate with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.¹¹

Shortly afterward, on May 6, the Ligue Communiste named Alain Krivine as its Candidate for president of the republic in elections provoked by the resignation of President de Gaulle. Krivine was at the time serving in the 150th Infantry Regiment at Verdun, into which he had been drafted soon after the May-June 1968 events. He was given a special furlough to conduct his campaign.¹²

Krivine received 239,076 votes, or about 1 percent of the total, compared to the leading candidate in the first-round election (and ultimate victor) Georges Pompidou's vote of 10,050,804, or a little more than 44 percent.¹³ In the second round the Ligue Communiste campaigned in favor of a blank ballot.¹⁴

In the period following its establishment, the Ligue Communiste centered much of its attention on campaigning against the war in Vietnam. In November 1969 this brought the temporary arrest of Pierre Frank, Alain Krivine's wife, Michèle, and various other leaders of the LC.¹⁵

In spite of the role which many of its leaders had played in the May-June 1968 movement, the Ligue Communiste was not able to maintain a continuing major influence among the students. Many years later a leader of the group who had gone through the experience attributed this to the fact that the LC people continued to appeal to the students principally on such grand issues as the Vietnam war rather than becoming involved with more mundane issues having to do with the living and study conditions

in the universities. In contrast, the OCI Trotskyists did pay extensive attention to such matters and were able to emerge as the political group with most influence in the student movement.¹⁶

The LC also conducted campaigns on several other international issues in addition to Vietnam. These included protests against persecution of Czech dissidents,¹⁷ demonstrations against the Franco regime's persecution of Basque nationalists,¹⁸ and rallies to back the Palestinians.¹⁹ In June 1971 they organized a large demonstration, together with the Lutte Ouvrière group, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Paris Commune.²⁰

The Second Congress of the Ligue Communiste met late in May 1971 in Rouen. It was reportedly attended by nearly 500 delegates and observers, including forty-five observers from organizations in twenty-seven different countries. It was reported that "according to the credentials report given to the convention, 65 percent of those present were under twenty-five. By occupation, they were 25 percent wage and salary workers, 43 percent teachers, and 43 percent students. Ten percent were female."²¹

The Ligue Communiste suffered some persecution at the hands of the government of President Georges Pompidou. Late in 1971 Charles Michaloux, executive editor of *Rouge*, was accused of five counts of libel against the police and was found guilty on four of these charges. He was fined the equivalent of about \$1,300.²² A month later the well-known publisher François Maspero, who had recently joined the Ligue Communiste, was convicted on the same kind of charge.²³

On October 21, 1971, thirteen members of the Political Bureau of the LC, including Henri Weber, Daniel Bensaid, and Charles Michaloux, were arrested in connection with a demonstration the LC had organized in front of the United States consulate some time before. They were subsequently released without any formal charges being

brought against them.²⁴ Early the following year another Ligue Communiste leader, Pierre Rousset, was jailed for some time, allegedly for being involved in transmitting "material capable of being used in making explosives" to Latin American revolutionary groups.²⁵

In spite of the LC's support for Latin American terrorist and guerrilla activities, the party expressed opposition to the kidnapping of Robert Negrette, head of personnel of the Renault Company, supposedly by Maoist elements. The LC issued its own statement on the subject and joined with several other groups in another criticism of the kidnapping.²⁶ It also issued a statement denouncing the international outcry against the murder of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games.²⁷

During 1972 the Ligue Communiste won two groups of recruits from the Parti Socialiste Unifié. In January a group of seventeen PSU members publicly announced that they were resigning from that party and joining the LC.²⁸ Then in December forty-seven more PSU members, including two who belonged to its National Bureau and three from its National Political Directorate, announced their affiliation with the Ligue Communiste.²⁹

The third congress of the Ligue met in December 1972. There were 287 delegates who were said to represent "386 cells, 80 cities, and 18 sections of Paris. Of the delegates, 176 were workers, 100 students, and 11 high-school students." The Ligue claimed a membership of 5,000, including 68 percent "full members" and 32 percent "candidates." It was said that "The Ligue has cells or members in 270 factories and carries out regular propaganda activities in 100 others," and that it "has more than fifty full-time functionaries throughout the country."³⁰

The last mass activity of the Ligue Communiste was its participation in the parliamentary elections of March 1973. At the Ligue's December 1972 convention a minor-

ity had favored abstaining on both rounds of the election. However, a majority of 191 to 23 supported nomination of Trotskyist candidates in the first round and supported the candidates of the Socialist-Communist-Left Radical Union of the Left on the second round.³¹ As a consequence, in the first round on March 4 the Ligue ran a joint slate with another Trotskyist group, *Lutte Ouvrière*, the two parties apportioning candidacies between them and not running rival nominees. The Ligue Communiste ran ninety-two candidates who received about 100,000 votes.³² The general results were that the vote of the joint Trotskyist slate "generally ranged between 1.5 and 2 percent; in a few cases the far left vote was 3 percent, and in one case it was even 5 percent."³³

Subsequently, the Ligue Communiste followed through on its plans to support the candidates of the Union of the Left in the second round. Pierre Frank explained how they were able to do so in spite of the presence on the ticket of Left Radical nominees and the historical opposition of Trotskyists to popular fronts. He argued that the Left Radicals "represent neither a political [nor] a social force. They are individuals who were elected with the help of Communist and Socialist votes. . . . The Union de la Gauche therefore is an alliance of reformist parties solely and not an alliance between the reformists and any bourgeois party. From this standpoint, *the Union de la Gauche is not a new Popular Front.*"³⁴

In June 1973 the government of Pompidou suddenly legally dissolved the Ligue Communiste as an aftermath of a demonstration by the Ligue on June 21—held to protest a meeting in the Mutualité building in Paris of a far right organization, *Ordre Nouveau*—during which there had been clashes with the police. Alain Krivine and Pierre Rousset were arrested. This action of the Pompidou government aroused very extensive protests from a variety of organizations, including the Socialist and Communist parties and several trade union groups. The Trotskyists

organized a worldwide campaign of protest.³⁵

The Ligue's newspaper, *Rouge*, continued to publish, and for a time the former members of the LC rallied around it;³⁶ they did not try to maintain any formal party organization. Krivine was cited as saying that "we do not want to reconstitute the Ligue secretly. We will continue to express ourselves legally. But we think it would be melodramatic to get into a situation where several thousand militants would have to go underground."³⁷

The election in mid-1974 precipitated by the death of President Pompidou provided members and leaders of the former Ligue Communiste with a chance to establish a new organization. This was the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire (FCR), which was organized to back the presidential candidacy of Alain Krivine. At the same time it was noted that "the FCR's program emphasizes the need for independent organization of the working class. The socialist alternative to the bourgeois parties and the reformists is projected in such demands as expropriation of all the big industrial trusts and the banks, with management to be placed under workers control. . . ."³⁸

After the election Daniel Bensaïd, member of the Political Bureau of the ex-LC, noted that the FCR "is ready to play, in an even better fashion, a role that has been poorly filled since the dissolution of the Ligue Communiste. The task is immense, but we will not be deterred. The election was only the beginning, not the end."³⁹ By the end of the year the FCR had been converted into the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR). The new group held its first congress in December 1974.

The First Decade of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire

The membership of the LCR remained very young. A report on its founding congress stated that although the average age of the

delegates there was three years higher than that of the delegates to the third congress of the Ligue Communiste two years before, "the most numerous age brackets in the organization are 21-26 years old (47 percent), 26-30 years (27 percent) and 18-20 years (13 percent)." This document went on to say that "about 50 percent of the militants have been in the Trotskyist movement only since 1972. Only 26 percent have more than five years political activity in our current; 21 percent joined in 1974."

There had been a certain degree of "proletarianization" of the LCR, compared to the PC. At the time of its founding congress, 61 percent of the members were reported to have been "wage workers," but only 12 percent were "blue-collar workers," whereas 17 percent were white-collar workers, 5 percent technicians, 3 percent supervisory personnel, 13 percent tenured teachers, 8 percent substitute teachers, and 4 percent were unemployed. University students still made up 24 percent of the LCR's membership, and 5 percent were high school students.⁴⁰

There were at least four factions or "tendencies" in the LCR at its inception. The majority element, which had about 60 percent of the delegates at the founding congress of the LCR, oriented the group toward trying to achieve unity with what was left of the Parti Socialiste Unifié. The PSU had recently split, with a majority of its leaders and members joining the reconstituted Socialist Party headed by François Mitterrand, and those remaining in the PSU had called for "building a revolutionary and self-management force. . . ." The LCR majority felt that these events presaged the expansion of French Trotskyism by absorbing what was left of the PSU.⁴¹

One of the first activities undertaken by the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire was the organization in October 1975 of a "Fête Rouge" to raise funds to convert *Rouge* from a weekly to a daily newspaper. It was reported that "the LCR projected the festival as a meeting place of groups to the

left of the Communist and Socialist parties in France and internationally. Groups of this type as well as sections of the Fourth International were invited to set up display booths and to promote their literature."

The Paris newspaper *Le Monde*, in reporting on this Fête Rouge, commented that "the importance of this demonstration goes considerably beyond its strictly utilitarian interests. It was also a matter of showing that the Trotskyist movement, and tomorrow its daily newspaper, undertakes and will be undertaking actions and struggles solidly rooted in day-to-day life. . . . It was a particular success for the LCR."⁴²

In spite of their initial optimism the leaders and members of the LCR recognized by the end of 1976 that they were in fact making little progress. The sympathetic Paris weekly magazine *Politique Hebdo* prefaced an interview with LCR leader René Yvetot in November 1976 with observations on "the [temporary?] crisis racking the far left." It noted that "this crisis is a moral one. For many, political activism has become unbearable. . . . It is a crisis of organization. Copying the Bolshevik model, even restored to its pre-Stalinist 'purity,' has led to dysfunctions. . . . This has resulted in underpoliticalization of the activists and in the intermediary cadres becoming mired in bureaucratism; it has increased the gap between the top and the bases. The crisis is also a political one. The contrast between the political marginalization of the far left and its real base in the unions . . . inspires a retreat into a sectarian siege mentality or else opportunism. . . . The Ligue is going through its 'moment of self-criticism.'"⁴³

This situation was recognized by the Second Congress of the LCR in January 1977. The "Organizational Thesis" adopted there noted that "although having acquired a determining weight in the extreme left, the LCR is not an organization with significant working class roots. In developing its audience, it is in a political and organizational crisis."⁴⁴

The Second Congress, attended by 420 delegates, was marked by very extensive debate among the various points of view represented. A report on the meeting noted that "the vote on the political resolutions . . . indicated the emergence of a new majority. Tendency E dissolved and adopted the amended resolutions put forward by Tendency D. The latter received 54.7 percent of the votes, as compared to 27 percent for Tendency A, 4.7 percent for Tendency B, 3 percent for the Brest Working Group, and 4.45 percent for the other working groups." The most bitterly debated question was the role of women within the LCR and the work of the organization in the women's movement.⁴⁵

For several years much of the energy and resources of the LCR centered on publication of a daily newspaper. The first issue of *Rouge* as a daily appeared on March 15, 1976.⁴⁶ From its inception it faced problems of limited circulation and high cost. It was reported in June 1977, when daily sales were 11,000 copies, that 5,000 more were necessary for *Rouge* to break even financially. The LCR had a special drive to raise 800,000 francs to allow the paper to "survive the summer" of 1977.⁴⁷ Finally, in February 1979 the Political Bureau of the LCR decided to revert *Rouge* from a daily to a weekly.⁴⁸

The LCR also published a theoretical review, *Critique Communiste*. Usually each issue of this publication dealt broadly with one kind of problem. For instance, early issues dealt with ecology and environmental matters, militarism and Bonapartism, and municipal issues. The October–November 1977 issue examined the sixtieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and discussion of the eternal question among the Trotskyists of "the nature of the Soviet Union."⁴⁹

In 1979 the LCR was able to establish a youth group, the Jeunesses Communistes Révolutionnaires. That organization held its second congress in December 1980, at

which attention was particularly centered on the coming presidential election and upon gaining influence among young workers since the organization was principally made up of students.⁵⁰

With the approach of the parliamentary election of 1978 the LCR first sought to negotiate with the parties of the Union of the Left (Socialists, Communists and Left Radicals), particularly with the Communist Party, presumably with a view to getting some LCR candidates included on the ticket of the coalition. Its rationale for this position was expressed by *Rouge*: "If the left wins, the two principal parties of the working class will be present in the government and the workers will think that this government is theirs. . . ." However, the Communists were quite unwilling to enter into negotiations with the Trotskyites, and Charles Fiterman of the Communists' national secretariat was quoted as saying that "all dialogue with the LCR is totally inopportune."⁵¹

When the Communists in effect broke up the Union of the Left, at least temporarily, by demanding fundamental changes in the coalition's "common program," the LCR sent an "Open Letter to the Communist Party" in which it urged the PCF to agree in the second round of the elections to support Socialist candidates where they had run ahead of the Communist nominees in the first round. This letter noted that "the issue is not whether 250, 500 or 729 subsidiaries will be nationalized. The burning issue for the workers is: Will Giscard, Barre, and Chirac triumph once again, or will the workers parties win a majority?"⁵² When the PCF in fact decided to continue to run all its own candidates in the second round elections, Krivine of the LCR denounced that decision as "sectarian."⁵³

The Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire itself formed a coalition with two other far-left groups, the Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs and the Comités Communistes pour l'Autogestion, with each organization agreeing not to run competing candi-

dates in the first round and to support each others' nominees.⁵⁴ This coalition issued a joint electoral platform, and the LCR issued its own platform, in which it argued that "the kind of government that the workers must establish is not a Union of the Left government. It is a government of the CP and SP alone, of which the workers will insist that it meet their demands and respond to their aspirations."⁵⁵

Soon after the 1978 elections the LCR sponsored a meeting, attended by 10,000 people, on the theme "May 1968—May 1978," which centered particularly on the significance of "Eurocommunism" and the future of the French Communist Party. The speakers included not only leaders of the Trotskyist groups, the LCR and *Lutte Ouvrière*, but also Roger Garaudy and Jean Ellenstein, who had recently been expelled from the Communist Party, as well as the Soviet dissident Leonid Plouchtich, Malo de Molina, international secretary of the Spanish Communist Party, and unofficial representatives of the French Socialist and PSU parties.⁵⁶

Following the split in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International at the end of 1979, when the followers of the Argentine, Nahuel Moreno, broke away from USEC, a split of some importance took place in the *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire*. A significant minority of the LCR—perhaps between 400 and 500 members—⁵⁷ opposed the expulsion of the Morenoists. They broke away to form the *Ligue Communiste Internationaliste*, which in September 1980 merged with the OCI of Pierre Lambert.⁵⁸

The LCR held its Fourth Congress at the end of June 1980. It adopted a general political resolution, one on the 1981 presidential election, one on "the construction of the LCR," and new statutes for the party. There were minorities of varying sizes in the vote on each of these documents. The one on "the construction of the LCR" passed with only a 53 percent majority. The most important decisions of the Fourth Congress were

those to run Krivine once again for president in the forthcoming election and to follow the general policy of the United Secretariat affiliates of a "turn to industry."⁵⁹

Although the LCR ran Krivine as its candidate in the first round of the 1981 presidential election, the party's Fifth Congress in December 1981 (after the election of Mitterrand and subsequent parliamentary elections which gave the Socialist Party an absolute majority in Parliament and the Socialist-Communist combination a two-thirds' majority) proclaimed that "this government is not a bourgeois government like the others, since the SP and PCF are overwhelmingly in the majority, and the workers who have permitted their victory turn to them to govern in their interest. . . ." It added that "the conflict will become sharp between the austerity policy of the new government . . . and the hopes of the electoral majority of the workers parties among the workers, made more urgent by the feeling of their own power."⁶⁰

The Fifth Congress saw revolutionary potential in the situation. It claimed to see "the prospect of a confrontation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, which leads in time to a revolutionary situation in France, although it is not possible to foresee its rhythm, profundity or duration."⁶¹ This same political resolution of the Fifth Congress of the LCR claimed that the principal "organizational task" of the party was "to generalize the turn towards industry," so as to gain more influence in the organized labor movement.⁶² As a matter of fact, the LCR was particularly active in the Communist-controlled *Confédération Général du Travail (CGT)* and in the Socialist-oriented *Confédération Française Démocratique des Travailleurs (CFDT)*. Leaders of the CFDT admitted to the author in 1982 that there was an active LCR minority in their organization, and one said that LCR supporters caused difficulties for the CFDT leadership because they always took "extreme positions." There were no Trotskyists in the national

leadership of the CFDT, although CFDT leaders admitted that the LCR had strength in a number of the Confédération's local unions.⁶³

It clearly continued to be more difficult for the LCR to work within the CGT, which generally was still tightly controlled by the Communist Party. LCR leaders claimed that they had helped to get a number of CGT local unions to express strong support for the Solidarity movement in Poland, even after it had been suppressed by the Polish government.⁶⁴

In the first round of the 1981 presidential election the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire once again nominated Krivine as its candidate. At the time it issued a pamphlet entitled *Alain Krivine, Candidate of Labor Unity*, which stressed the need to defeat President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, insisted that the LCR had long supported electoral unity between the Socialists and Communists, criticized the public quarreling between leaders of those two parties, concluding with the argument that the best way, in the first round, to show support for working-class unity was to vote for Krivine.⁶⁵ However, about two weeks before the first-round election electoral authorities removed Krivine from the ballot with the explanation that all the legal requirements for listing him as a candidate had not been fulfilled.⁶⁶

After Mitterrand's election and his decision to dissolve Parliament and call new legislative elections, the Central Committee of the LCR adopted a resolution calling for establishment of a purely Socialist-Communist cabinet, and insisting that the Socialists and Communists must collaborate in the parliamentary poll. The pamphlet containing that resolution noted that the LCR would have candidates in the first round in "several dozen constituencies." It also proclaimed that "to vote for the candidates of the LCR is to vote against the right, making guarantees for the future, that the hopes of May 10 not be betrayed."⁶⁷

Early in 1983 the LCR issued a pamphlet denouncing the failure of the Mitterrand Socialist-Communist government to fulfill these same hopes, and stressing again the need for a new revolutionary party: "For more than a year and a half there has been a National Assembly and government with a Socialist and Communist majority. Unemployment remains the problem No. 1 of the French. Isn't what was true in 1979 with more than one million unemployed even more true in 1982 with more than two million?" The pamphlet insisted that a new revolutionary party was "indispensable to reinforce the unity, independence and mobilization of the working class."⁶⁸

The LCR ran a joint ticket with Lutte Ouvrière in the 1983 municipal elections. They labeled their list "the voice of workers against austerity."⁶⁹

The LCR held its Sixth Congress in January 1984. It adopted a political thesis which had the support of 60 percent of the delegates, but three other drafts had the backing of 25, 14, and 1 percent respectively. This resolution claimed that the experience of the left in the government was "the failure of a policy of class collaboration." It sketched the role of the LCR in seeking "the united mobilization of the workers," its insistence to the Socialists and Communists on the "need to govern against the capitalists," and in organizing opposition groups in various unions. It returned strongly to the theme of the need to build a revolutionary workers party, in passing indicating its willingness to talk about unity with the PCI and Lutte Ouvrière.⁷⁰

At the time of the reorganization of the Mitterrand government in July 1984, with a change of prime ministers and removal of the Communists from the cabinet, Rouge made clear the LCR's position toward the new version of the administration. One headline read "Combat this government," and proclaimed that "the Union of the Left, rising on May 10, 1981, died on July 19, 1984." It also challenged the Communists

to become "the champion of the class struggle."⁷¹

The Lutte Ouvrière Group

Early History of the Lutte Ouvrière

The third major French Trotskyist tendency since the early 1960s has been the Lutte Ouvrière group (LO). It traced its origins to a faction of the pre-World War II Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste which broke away in 1939 under the leadership of David Komer, more generally known as Barta, and his wife, Louise.⁷² From the beginning, the Barta group adopted a position which was to characterize it and its successors for more than four decades. According to Jacqueline Pluet-Déspatin, the group argued that "the ideas of the Russian opposition had not taken root in the French working-class milieu because of control over the proletariat of the country by two opportunist parties, one of which, the Communist Party, gained its prestige from the revolution of October. The ideas of the Opposition were disseminated above all among the intellectuals. . . . The Communist Opposition thus acquired a petty-bourgeois character, which strongly handicapped the later development of the movement at a moment when the power of proletarian action in the years 1932 to 1938 should have permitted diffusion of its ideas."⁷³ This emphasis on the primordial need to concentrate agitation among the workers became a hallmark of the Barta group and its successors.

The Barta group published in November 1940 a statement on "the Struggle Against the Second Imperialist World War." In it, they argued, according to Jacqueline Pluet-Déspatin, that "the occupation of France by the armies of the Reich did not give any validity to the national problem; if it was felt necessary to break down the bastions of imperialist violence which are Germany and Italy, and refuse Hitler the right of speaking as master, this must be done through the class struggle." Pluet-Déspatin added that "the means of carrying this out,

according to Barta, are passive resistance to German imperialism and active struggle against the anti-worker action of the French bourgeoisie."⁷⁴

In October 1942 the Barta group began to publish a monthly periodical, *La Lutte de Classes*, which thereafter appeared "with remarkable regularity."⁷⁵ In it, Barta continued to call for transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war, predicting major revolutions at the end of the conflict in Germany, Italy, and other European countries. He opposed participation in the Resistance and was very critical of what he saw as the nationalist weakness of some of the other French Trotskyists.⁷⁶

Although there were some negotiations between the Lutte de Classes group and the other Trotskyist factions during World War II, these ended with Barta and his friends denouncing the "petty-bourgeois" nature of the other French Trotskyist groups. As a consequence, the Lutte de Classes group did not participate in unification of French Trotskyism which resulted in formation of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste in March 1944.⁷⁷

During the war and immediate postwar periods the Barta group was formally known as the Union Communiste (l'Ve Internationale). After strong protests by the PCI at the Barta faction's use of the name of the International, they changed their name in May 1946 to Union Communiste (Trotskyiste).⁷⁸ They were in that period more commonly known as the Lutte de Classes group.

In the immediate postwar period, the Lutte de Classes group concentrated on trying to get a foothold in the labor movement. Although not numbering more than thirty people, they did succeed in gaining influence among the workers of the Renault auto plant near Paris. In April-May 1947 they organized and led a strike in the Renault plant which gained widespread publicity and resulted in substantial gains although not a complete triumph for the workers of the enterprise.⁷⁹

After the Renault strike the workers were

unhappy with the attitude that the CGT had taken toward their walkout, and decided to organize an independent union, the Syndicat Démocratique Renault. The members of the Barta group concentrated their efforts on the attempt to firmly establish that union and perhaps to have it as the core for a rival of the CGT. The new union put out a periodical, *La Voix des Travailleurs*, and for the time being *La Lutte de Classes* ceased publication. However, the union's paper closed down in January 1949, and in the following month *La Lutte de Classes* reappeared.⁸⁰

The Lutte de Classes group had not had the manpower or resources needed to carry out the kind of effort it had undertaken with the Renault workers. As a consequence, they soon lost their influence in the Renault plant and by 1950 had virtually ceased to exist as an organized group. *La Lutte de Classes* again ceased to appear in March of that year.⁸¹

Former members of the group continued to see one another from time to time, and the events of 1956 provided the impetus for them to reestablish an active political organization. They got together to organize meetings to denounce both the Soviet invasion of Hungary and the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt, and in the process attracted a few younger people to their ranks.

Reconstituted, the Lutte de Classes group began once more to try to gain some influence among the workers. They started to issue regular factory bulletins every two weeks which were distributed among workers of several plants in the Paris area. These mimeographed bulletins consisted of a political argument on one side and news about the particular plant and the worker's problems in it on the other side. The group also began to issue a mimeograph version of *La Lutte de Classes*. Finally, in 1967, they began to publish a printed weekly paper, *Voix Ouvrière*, from which they came to be known as the Voix Ouvrière group.⁸²

By November 1967 the Voix Ouvrière group felt that it had gained sufficiently to

formally constitute itself into a party. It took the name again of Union Communiste (IVe Internationale), and *Voix Ouvrière* became the organ of the revived party.⁸³

As was true of most far left groups in France, the events of 1968 gave a major impetus to the development of Voix Ouvrière. Soon after the outbreak of the student strike and demonstrations in the universities of Nanterre and Sorbonne, the Voix Ouvrière group, which had gained some influence among the workers in the factories in Nantes, played a major role in organizing a sitdown strike in those plants. They later said that this was the beginning of what soon became a general strike of French workers, with the ostensible support of all three existing central labor organizations of that time, the CGT, Force Ouvrière, and the Catholic CFDT.⁸⁴

A few months after the May 1968 events the group published a special number of their paper describing those events. It particularly denounced the role of the Socialists and Communists in curbing workers' militancy.⁸⁵

As a consequence of these events, the Voix Ouvrière group doubled its membership. Those events also brought down upon it—together with most other far left political groups—a decree of the de Gaulle government illegalizing them. A few months later, however, they were able to reorganize under the name Lutte Ouvrière, which was the new title of their weekly periodical. As Lutte Ouvrière, they supported the candidacy of LCR leader Alain Krivine in the 1969 presidential election.⁸⁶

Electoral Activities of the Lutte Ouvrière

During the 1970s the Lutte Ouvrière group devoted considerable time and attention to the electoral arena. This was certainly not because they felt that they had a chance of gaining power through the ballot, but because elections provided their candidates with free radio and television time and the

party as a whole with a chance to establish contacts with workers, peasants, and others which otherwise were not available to it.⁸⁷

As has been already noted, in the first major electoral effort, the parliamentary elections of 1973, Lutte Ouvrière had an electoral alliance with the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire. LO put up 171 candidates, described by Arlette Laguiller as "all workers: metal workers, white collar employees, postmen, railroaders, specialized and professional workers, nurses, technicians . . . all representative of our movement."⁸⁸ The votes for the LO candidates came to more than 200,000, or about one-tenth of the vote received by the nominees of the Communist Party in the same constituencies.⁸⁹ In the following year Lutte Ouvrière for the first time ran a candidate for president, Arlette Laguiller, who had been one of the leaders of a recent bank strike in Paris.⁹⁰ In the first round of that campaign the Union of the Left ran François Mitterrand against Jean Chaban-Delmas and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the candidates of the Gaullists and other forces on the right. In the second round Mitterrand ran against Giscard d'Estaing and lost.

In her first television address of the campaign, Arlette Laguiller explained why she and her party felt it important to run in the first round of the poll. She said, "I want to say, and repeat, that my candidacy doesn't have for its object to be an obstacle to the election of Mitterrand, far from that." Rather, she said, "I run to permit the workers to vote against the Right without giving a blank check to Mitterrand, to permit them to affirm that, whatever the results which emerge from the election booths on the evening of May 19, it will be their wish to change their life, their resolution, which will be the determining one for the future."⁹¹

Arlette Laguiller received over 600,000 votes in the first round of the 1974 election.⁹² This amounted to 2.33 percent of the total vote.⁹³ In 1977 Lutte Ouvrière ran joint

lists with the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire in the municipal elections.⁹⁴ The LO made perhaps its most spectacular campaign in the parliamentary election of 1978. At that time it refused an electoral arrangement with the LCR. Instead, it put up 470 candidates, one for each of the constituencies in metropolitan France except Corsica, in the first round. It was reported at the time that almost all the nominees were wage or salary workers and that 191 were women.⁹⁵

In that election the LO ran Laguiller in the department of Puy-de-Dôme, in the Massif Central region, in which there was a small industrial town and a surrounding agricultural area and where they thought she might stand a chance of winning. However, she only received about 8 percent of the vote instead of the 20-25 percent they had hoped would be hers in the first round.⁹⁶

Leaders of the PCI and LCR accused the Lutte Ouvrière of conducting "populist" rather than Trotskyist election campaigns, of emphasizing that Laguiller was a working woman rather than stressing her party's program. They also pointed out that the LO tended to do much better than the other Trotskyist groups principally in the more backward parts of the country.⁹⁷

In analyzing the results of the 1984 elections for the European Parliament, the French Pablist periodical noted that Lutte Ouvrière had received about 2.09 percent of the vote throughout France. It commented that the distribution of LO's vote "reinforces the presumption that the LO vote is more often a populist vote, of the small against the large, the governed against the governors. . . ."⁹⁸

Lutte Ouvrière leaders did not entirely deny the charges of their rivals. They said that they did try to appeal to the average worker, to argue that the bourgeoisie cheated them, that it was unfair that the people who do all the work received so little in return, rather than calling in their election speeches for the socialist revolution or explaining to the workers their particular

position on the nature of the Soviet Union or China, in which they felt the workers were not really interested. Insofar as the relatively good vote of LO in the more backward parts of the country was concerned, the Lutte Ouvrière leaders explained this in terms of the fact that they sought to offer candidates in all parts of the country, and that particularly in the more backward regions workers and peasants were frequently impressed by the fact that the LO nominees travelled widely through their constituencies, seeking contacts with the more humble citizens who usually never saw a candidate for deputy.⁹⁹

Other Activities of the Lutte Ouvrière

Lutte Ouvrière continued to concentrate much of its attention and activity on the workers. As they had started to do in the 1950s, they were in the early 1980s still printing and distributing a variety of mimeographed bulletins for different groups of workers. An example of such a publication was *Lutte Ouvrière PTT Paris 18*, distributed among postal workers and dated July 6, 1982. The front of this throwaway dealt rather scathingly with the Mitterrand government's recently announced plan to limit wage increases. On the reverse side were various short items of specific interest to the postal workers of the Paris region.

Lutte Ouvrière continued to work within all three major trade union groups, but particularly in the CGT and the CFDT. Before 1968 they worked principally within the CGT, although their trade union militants were often thrown out of CGT unions by Communist leaders of those organizations. When this happened they went into the corresponding Force Ouvrière or CFDT union.¹⁰⁰ They had some leadership posts in the lower echelons of the three central labor groups. Probably their most famous trade unionist was Arlette Laguiller, who was an official of Force Ouvrière's bank workers' union.¹⁰¹

Much of the LO's time and attention continued to center on the publication and distribution of their newspaper. From the mid-1970s they also published a monthly magazine, *Lutte de Classe*. It was subtitled "Trotskyist Monthly" and bore on its cover the slogan, "For the Reconstruction of the IV International." It carried longer and more analytical articles than were possible in a weekly newspaper. For instance, on April 20, 1982, it had a piece attacking the economic policies of the Mitterrand government, an extensive article on the guerrilla movements in Central America, and a study of the Italian Red Brigades.¹⁰²

Lutte Ouvrière organized an annual festival. The newspaper *Le Monde* noted that at their eighth annual "fête" in May 1978 "the visitors promenaded . . . almost two hundred fifty stands, some showing jewels or culinary specialties, others presided over by French and foreign revolutionary movements, the feminist movement and the pirate radios." In the two days of the festival 20,000 people attended. The festival grounds were dotted with banners proclaiming such things as "the emancipation of the workers is the task of the workers themselves," and "Only one solution: revolution." Arlette Laguiller made the principal address of the festival.¹⁰³

Unlike the other Trotskyist groups, Lutte Ouvrière did not maintain a public headquarters where meetings open to nonmembers were held and the party's literature was for sale. Their explanation for this was that security considerations made the maintenance of such a headquarters dangerous.¹⁰⁴

The Lutte Ouvrière group maintained more or less friendly relations with the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, although having little or no contact with the OCI-PCI. In fact, in the early 1970s the LO and LCR negotiated on the possibility of unification and reached a tentative agreement.¹⁰⁵ These discussions ultimately broke down, although various kinds of cooperation continued. Thus, in 1978, they partici-

pated in a public discussion organized by the LCR on the issue of Eurocommunism.¹⁰⁶ In July 1982 the two groups began publishing each month a common supplement to their respective weekly papers.¹⁰⁷ As we have already noted, the LO sometimes also cooperated with the LCR in the electoral field. A 1984 pamphlet of the LCR characterized relations between the two groups as "fraternal and loyal collaboration conducting common work."¹⁰⁸

Ideological Positions and Foreign Contacts of Lutte Ouvrière

Lutte Ouvrière held different ideological positions from the other French Trotskyist parties. Although they continued to recognize the Soviet Union as being a "degenerated workers' state," they denied that other Communist Party dominated regimes were in that category. Those they defined as still being capitalist. However, they stood ready to defend any Communist-dominated regime which was attacked militarily by an "imperialist" power.¹⁰⁹

In part because of its different ideological position, Lutte Ouvrière never became associated with any of the major tendencies within International Trotskyism. They did participate in the 1966 London Conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International, and submitted a document criticizing the IC's characterization of all Communist Party-controlled regimes as "degenerated" or "deformed" workers states, but they did not join the International Committee.¹¹⁰

Subsequently, Lutte Ouvrière organized a number of international conferences of its own attended by representatives of various kinds of organizations. For instance, the sixth such meeting, in November 1975, was attended by people from the British International Socialists, the Italian Lotta Comunista group, Combat Ouvrier from the French Antilles, Spark from the United States, the Spanish POUM, and the African Union of

Internationalist Communist Workers, as well as Lutte Ouvrière. It was featured principally by a debate between Lutte Ouvrière representatives and those from the International Socialists about the nature and progress of the Portuguese Revolution.¹¹¹

Subsequently, Lutte Ouvrière became the center of a small international Trotskyist grouping of its own. The other members were Combat Ouvrier, Spark, and the African Union of Internationalist Communist Workers, the last of these an organization of African workers resident in France.¹¹²

Other French Trotskyist Groups

In addition to the three major French Trotskyist groups, that is, the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, and Lutte Ouvrière, there also existed by the early 1980s several other organizations which were or had been Trotskyist. Some of these were composed of dissident elements of one or another of the three major parties.

Two groups which had broken away from the OCI-PCI were the Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire and the Tendence Quatrième Internationaliste. The former was the core of the "Varga" group which was expelled from the OCI in 1971-72 and was affiliated with what was called simply the Fourth International. It published a two-page weekly newspaper, *La Vérité*, which carried the subtitle "Organ of the Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire, French Section of the IV International."¹¹³

The Tendence Quatrième Internationaliste also had originated in the OCI-PCI. It consisted of a small group which had broken away at the time of the expulsion of the Argentine group Política Obrera from the Lambertist international grouping, the COROI, in 1979.¹¹⁴

In the middle of the 1970s a small group associated with the International Spartacist tendency, the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, was established, reportedly as the result of

proselytizing by several members of the Spartacist League of the United States.¹¹⁵ In 1978 it conducted a strong campaign against the Union of the Left, which it labeled a Popular Front. Its slogan was "Comrades, don't vote for the candidates of the popular front!"¹¹⁶ However, there is no indication that the Ligue Trotskyiste had any candidates of its own.

At the time of the 1981 presidential election the Ligue Trotskyiste expressed its willingness to give "savagely critical support" to the Communist leader Georges Marchais if he would run against François Mitterrand. Subsequently, they condemned the "betrayal" of Marchais and the PCF for remaining in the Union of the Left.¹¹⁷

In the Fall of 1980 the Ligue Trotskyiste de France began publishing a periodical, *Le Bolshevik*. The editor-in-chief was William Cazenave. It carried on the same kinds of campaigns as did the Spartacists elsewhere—opposition to Polish Solidarity, support of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and strong opposition to the Khomeini regime in Iran.¹¹⁸

For some years, the Posadas section of International Trotskyism also had a tiny group in France, the Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire (Trotskyiste), which in August 1962 began publishing a newspaper, *Lutte Communiste*. Like publications of other groups of that tendency, *Lutte Communiste* consisted in large degree of writings and speeches of J. Posadas. The Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire (Trotskyiste) was not dissolved by the de Gaulle government after the events of May–June 1968, as were most of the other Trotskyist groups. It was reported as late as 1978 to be still publishing.¹¹⁹

The followers of Nahuel Moreno also maintained a very small organization in France after Moreno broke with the United Secretariat in 1979. Known as the Socialist Workers Group, it began publishing a periodical, *Tribune Ouvrière*, in 1982.¹²⁰ However, no information is available about

whether the group continued to exist in the mid-1980s.

By the mid-1980s there were also at least some sympathizers in France of the International Socialist Tendency. They were reportedly represented at an international meeting of that tendency in Great Britain in September 1984.¹²¹ No further details are available about this group.

Finally, when Michel Pablo broke with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in the mid-1960s, a small group of his followers was established in France. This was the Alliance Marxiste Révolutionnaire (AMR). In 1969 they attempted a policy of entrism in the Parti Socialiste Unifié, but that experiment proved fruitless and they soon broke away again. They then merged with another group, the Comité Communiste pour l'Autogestion (CCA). However, in December 1981 the CCA people withdrew and reformed their old organization. As was true generally of the followers of Pablo, the AMR by the early 1980s no longer considered itself a Trotskyiste organization.¹²²

Conclusion

By the early 1980s the French Trotskyist movement was one of the most substantial segments of International Trotskyism. The Parti Communiste Internationaliste was certainly one of the largest Trotskyite parties anywhere. The Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire and Lutte Ouvrière were considerably smaller, and some of the other groups were minute in size.

The three major Trotskyite groups all had at least marginal influence in organized labor, and the PCI was the largest single political group among the university students. The three parties were regarded as of sufficient political significance for the metropolitan press, particularly *Le Monde*, to report more or less regularly on their activities.

Most of the tendencies within International Trotskyism had their French affiliates by the early 1980s. The PCI was the key

organization in one of these tendencies, CORQI. Similarly, Lutte Ouvrière was the center of a small alignment of likeminded parties and groups. The LCR, for its part, was one of the major elements of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. In addition, the Vargaites, Spartacists, Morenoists, and followers of Michel Pablo all had small organizations in France.

It seemed possible by 1985 that disillusionment in the government of François Mitterrand and the parties associated with it in the Union of the Left might well present the Trotskyists of France with new and enlarged opportunities.

Trotskyism in the French Antilles

Trotskyism did not establish roots in the French Antilles, the West Indian French departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique, until the 1970s. Until then the far left in those territories had consisted of local communist parties, some Maoist groups, and the "autonomist" party, the Parti Progressiste Martiniquais led by ex-Communist Aimé Césaire.

However, in the 1970s and early 1980s organizations affiliated with three different tendencies of International Trotskyism were established. These were the United Secretariat, the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI), and the small element grouped around the French party Lutte Ouvrière.

The USEC affiliate, Groupe Révolution Socialiste (GRS—Revolutionary Socialist Group), had its origins with several leaders of the Communist Party of Martinique who were expelled from that party for "Guevarism." Two years later the GRS was formally established, but it was not until its first congress in December 1973 that it decided to affiliate with the United Secretariat. At its inception the GRS was said to have "a following among high school students and important sectors of the working class."

The GRS soon spread also to Guadeloupe. It was reported in 1980 that "our organization has about one hundred members and a substantial number of sympathizers. The largest number are in Martinique, but the branch in Guadeloupe is very good, being totally made up of union activists."¹

From the beginning, the GRS had a more or less close association with the USEC affiliate in France. As early as November 1972 the French Ligue Communiste and the GRS held a joint public meeting in Paris. Early

in the following year Alain Krivine, former presidential nominee of the Ligue Communiste, visited Martinique on behalf of the GRS.² In the 1974 French elections, in which Martinique and Guadeloupe as French departments participated, the GRS called upon its supporters to vote in the first round for Krivine of the (by then) Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) and in the second round for the Union of the Left nominee, François Mitterrand, the same policy as that of the LCR. However, in the 1981 presidential election the GRS called for its followers to abstain to emphasize its program in favor of independence for the two islands.³

The GRS regularly published a weekly periodical, *Révolution Socialiste*, which carried the slogan under its banner, "For the Construction of an Antilles Revolutionary Communist Party." By the early 1980s it was a four-page printed publication carrying political and labor news from Martinique and Guadeloupe as well as articles dealing with events elsewhere—in one issue, for instance, about Solidarity in Poland and the situation in Haiti.⁴

The members of the GRS kept in contact with revolutionary developments in other parts of the Caribbean. In 1982 it arranged for a trip of some of its youth group to revolutionary Grenada,⁵ in the same year one of its leaders, Vincent Placely, was a member of a prize jury of the Cuban Casa de las Américas.⁶

The GRS held its Fifth Congress in March 1982. A resolution adopted there called upon workers of the Antilles to take advantage of the greater freedom to operate that was being provided by the new government of President François Mitterrand to work for the independence of the area.⁷

At the time of the overthrow of Maurice Bishop in Grenada the GRS protested. They also made telephone contact with some of Bishop's associates who were under house arrest. The GRS also organized public demonstrations in both Martinique and Guadeloupe against the overthrow and Bishop's

murder, and the subsequent U.S. invasion of Grenada.⁸

At the time of the arrest in France in 1985 of a leading Guadeloupean independence advocate, Georges Faisans, the GRS participated in demonstrations in the island demanding his release. Alex Lollia, described as "a leader of both the Movement for United Trade Union Action . . . and the Revolutionary Socialist Group, broadcast radio appeals urging demonstrations on behalf of Faisans, who was finally freed by the Mitterrand government."⁹

The CORQI was represented in the French Antilles by the Groupe Trotskyist Antillais (GTA—Antilles Trotskyist Group). The GTA published a periodical, *L'Alliance Ouvrière et Paysanne*, and held its first congress in June 1984. The GTA strongly supported independence not only for Martinique and Guadeloupe but for French Guiana. It greeted the massive abstention of the voters of those three departments during the 1984 European parliament elections as an indication of rapidly growing sentiment for separation from France.¹⁰

Relations between the GTA and the GRS were sometimes strained. On at least some occasions soon after establishment of the GTA there were physical clashes between members of the two groups.¹¹

The oldest of the three Trotskyist groups in the French Antilles was that associated with Lutte Ouvrière in France. As early as 1965 those in the Antilles associated with Lutte Ouvrière issued a proclamation, "The Flag of the Masses Will Be the Red Flag," which was published in the November 16, 1965, issue of *Lutte Ouvrière*. It proclaimed its support for independence rather than autonomy for Guadeloupe, and urged that the struggle must be made "in the name of the international proletariat, the only force capable of participating in the socialist struggle on a world scale." It attacked a Maoist group then active in Guadeloupe, the Groupe d'Organisation Nationale de Guadeloupe (GONG), as being "nationalistic."¹²

By the late 1970s the Lutte Ouvrière group in the Antilles was publishing its own periodical, *Combat Ouvrière*, a weekly. It carried under its banner the description, "Revolutionary Communist (Trotskyist) Weekly." It also carried the slogans, "For the construction of a revolutionary labor party in Martinique and in Guadeloupe; For the emancipation of the peoples of Martinique and Guadeloupe; For the reconstruction of the IV International."¹³

German Trotskyism Before World War II

During the earliest years of the history of the Trotskyist movement, events in Germany played a leading role in the evolution of Leon Trotsky's ideas without the movement's having a group of major importance in that country. The rapid rise in the power of the Nazi Party began about a year after the launching of International Trotskyism and was a major factor in molding Trotsky's ideas concerning the United Front. The triumph of the Hitlerites in January 1933 in the face of virtually no resistance from the Communists was the principal factor in Trotsky's coming to the conclusion that reform of the Comintern and its member parties was impossible, thus turning Trotsky and his followers from a "faction" of the Communist movement into a rival to it, certainly one of the most fundamental changes of direction to take place during the more than half century of the existence of International Trotskyism.

During this same period German Trotskyism remained relatively weak. It was particularly cursed with the malady of factionalism which then and later was one of the characteristics of the whole Trotskyist movement. Some of the issues in these factional disputes were the same ones which in the 1930s and afterward were to be subjects of controversy within the movement generally: the nature of the Soviet Union, the relationship of International Trotskyism to the Stalinists, the issue of "entrism," and the allegedly "bureaucratic" behavior of Trotsky and other principal leaders of the movement. The factionalism continued when German Trotskyism became a movement of exiles, and still marked it four de-

cedes after the overthrow of the Nazi regime.

High Regard for Trotsky in Early KPD

Maurice Stobnicer has noted the particularly high regard in which Trotsky was held during the years before Lenin's death in the German Communist Party (KPD). He was particularly close to Heinrich Brandler, the co-leader of the KPD in the period just prior to Lenin's demise. When Brandler, August Thalheimer, and other KPD leaders were planning the abortive uprising of October 1923, they requested the presence of Trotsky in Germany to advise them on their preparations, a request which Zinoviev, the head of the Comintern, succeeded in getting turned down.

Even after the beginning of the struggle in the Soviet Communist Party, Trotsky's popularity in the German party continued for some time. His picture was prominently mounted on the wall of the room in which the KPD regional congress in the Middle Rhine was held in February 1924, and the KPD paper *Rote Fahne* carried as late as September 23, 1924, an announcement of a Berlin meeting organized by the party in honor of Trotsky. Karl Radek is said to have commented during this period that if the Russian Central Committee majority turned against Trotsky, the German Party would still align itself with him.¹

This situation did not last for long. The leadership of Brandler and Thalheimer in the KPD was repudiated and condemned by the Comintern, under Zinoviev's tutelage, and a new leadership of the "Center-Left" was put in place in the German party. Even Brandler sought to distance himself from Trotsky, and Stobnicer has noted that "in 1925 the German Communists were Brandlerians, Fischerians, centrists, or leftists, but no group expressed support for Trotsky. To declare oneself Trotskyist would signify entering into combat against the leadership of the Russian party and the International."²

Subsequently, under the leadership of Ruth Fischer and Arkady Maslow, Zinoviev's close allies, a process of "Bolshevization" was carried out in the KPD, eliminating anyone suspected of dissidence with the current party leadership.³

However, in November 1925, only three months after the Tenth Congress of the KPD had confirmed the control of Fischer-Maslow over the party, a national party conference forced their removal from the Political Bureau and converted the Fischer-Maslow group into one of the "opposition" faction.⁴ By the end of 1926 virtually all of the leaders of the Fischer-Maslow faction had been expelled from the German Communist Party.⁵ After a series of meetings of those who had been expelled, a new "Left Opposition" organization, the Leninbund, was established at a conference in Berlin in March 1928.⁶

The Leninbund

One of the many organizations of dissident Communists outside the Soviet Union to react favorably at first to Trotsky's call for the formation of an international movement of the Left Opposition was the Leninbund. Among those who had helped to establish the group were several temporarily exiled Soviet leaders, including the Zinovievist Georges Safarov and the Trotskyist Eleazar Solntsev. At its inception, according to Pierre Broué, the Leninbund had "several thousand" members.⁷

Although the Leninbund included both followers of Zinoviev and of Trotsky, at its inception its principal leaders were Arkady Maslow, Ruth Fischer, and Hugo Urbahns, who were Zinovievists rather than Trotskyists. Maslow was instrumental in launching its periodical, *Volkswille* (*People's Will*).⁸

Fischer and Maslow did not long remain in the Leninbund. When in May 1928 the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Comintern made a tentative offer to allow Leninbund members who were willing to "condemn immediately as antiprole-

tarian and counterrevolutionary the activity of the Maslow-Fischer-Urbahns group," and "who would retire immediately from the Bund and demand the dissolution of the organization," Maslow and Fischer accepted this proposition and withdrew from the Leninbund.⁹ Needless to say, they were not accepted back into the KPD.¹⁰ However, with their withdrawal, the principal role in the leadership of the Leninbund fell to Hugo Urbahns.

For some time the Leninbund under Urbahns's direction continued to be publicly friendly to Trotsky. Maurice Stobnicer has noted with regard to 1927-1929 that "it was above all in the place reserved for Trotsky in its press that the Leninbund served to some degree as an unofficial organ of Trotskyism in Germany. . . . During this period, there was scarcely a number of *Volkswille* or of *Die Fahne des Kommunismus* which didn't contain one or several articles of Trotsky, or didn't take a position in his favor, or make reference to his writings. In that period, the press of the Leninbund is the tribune of Trotsky in Germany."¹¹

Controversy With Urbahns

From the moment Trotsky went into exile, differences arose between Hugo Urbahns and those associated with him in the leadership of the Leninbund, on the one hand, and Leon Trotsky and elements within the Leninbund who were loyal to him and his ideas, on the other. These centered on four issues: the 1929 conflict between the Soviet Union and China over the Chinese Eastern Railway, the question of the nature of the Soviet Union, the status of the Left Opposition as a "faction" of the Comintern, and the alleged "nationalism" of Urbahns and his colleagues.

Apparently Trotsky several times invited Urbahns to come to Prinkipo to discuss various matters with him, but Urbahns resisted those invitations. As a consequence, the growing controversy took the form of ex-

changes of private letters, "open letters," and published discussions and polemics.

On the issue raised by the controversy between the Chiang Kai-shek government in China and the Soviet regime over the continuation of Soviet control of the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria, Trotsky, in an article entitled "The Defense of the Soviet Union and the Opposition," accused Urbahns of seeking "to straddle the fence" on the question. He summed up his criticism of the Urbahns position by saying that "stripped of its reservations, equivocations, and all other loopholes, its gist comes down to the following formula: Since the national revolution triumphed in China, while the counterrevolution has triumphed [or virtually triumphed, or is ineluctably bound to triumph] in Russia, therefore it follows that—what follows? The article does not give a clear answer. Its eclectic philosophy performs precisely the service of dodging a clear-out answer. . . ."¹²

Even more fundamental than Urbahns's disagreement with Trotsky over the Sino-Soviet dispute of 1929 was his different interpretation of the issue of "Thermidor," in essence, whether a counterrevolution had or had not taken place in the USSR under Stalin's leadership, as had occurred in France after the execution of Robespierre. This disagreement clearly led to basic differences of opinion over the class nature of the Soviet regime.

Trotsky, in the article already cited, argued that "the formula of Thermidor is of course a conditional formula, like every historical analogy. When I employed this formula for the first time against Zinoviev and Stalin, I immediately underscored its wholly conditional character."¹³

Trotsky went on to explain that "Thermidor in France was preceded by a *period of reaction* which unfolded while the power remained in the hands of the plebeians, the city's lower classes. Thermidor crowned this preparatory period of reaction by an out-and-out political catastrophe, as a result of

which the plebeians lost power. . . . Thermidor . . . indicates the direct transfer of power into the hands of a different class, after which the revolutionary class cannot regain power except through an armed uprising."¹⁴

Trotsky argued that that had not occurred in the Soviet Union, in spite of the tendencies toward Thermidor under Stalin. He said that "the fact that the Soviet proletariat found it beyond its strength to prevent the organizational crushing of the Opposition represented naturally a highly alarming symptom. But on the other hand, Stalin found himself driven, simultaneously with the crushing of the Left Opposition, to plagiarize partially from its program in all fields . . . and to convert an internal party maneuver into a very sharp and prolonged zigzag to the left. This shows that despite everything the proletariat still possesses powers to exert pressure and that the state apparatus still remains dependent on it. Upon this cardinal fact the Russian Opposition must continue to base its own policy, which is the *policy of reform and not of revolution*."¹⁵

Trotsky also used another argument, which he and his followers were to repeat many times over in later discussions of these same issues, to indicate that Thermidor was not an accomplished fact and that the USSR therefore remained essentially a workers' state. He noted that "the means of production, once the property of the capitalists, remain to this very day in the hands of the Soviet state. The land is nationalized. The exploiting elements are still excluded from the soviets and from the army. The monopoly of foreign trade remains a bulwark against the economic intervention of capitalism. All these are not trifles. . . ." ¹⁶

Trotsky said that in contrast to his own position, Urbahns argued that the Thermidorean reaction had already taken place. He cited an article in the Leninbund theoretical organ *Die Fahne des Kommunismus* which "drew an identity between the deportation of Trotsky and the guillotining of Robespierre and his companions. In other words,

Thermidor was proclaimed as accomplished. . . . Unfortunately the leadership of the Leninbund is stubbornly trying to convert this blunder into a basic line. *Volks-wille* of February 11 carries a resolution on the situation in Russia in connection with my deportation. This resolution flatly states: "This is Thermidor" . . . and it goes on to add: "Hence flows the necessity for the Russian proletariat to fight *for all liberties* against the Stalinist regime so that it may find itself equipped to cope with the impending open counterrevolution."¹⁷

Trotsky also cited a comment in an article in *Die Fahne des Kommunismus* to the effect that "Stalinist rule can no longer be regarded as representing the working class and it must therefore be combatted *by any and all means*." He concluded that "it is hardly surprising that with such a position Urbahns is obliged to make ever more frequent declarations to the effect that he is not 'one hundred percent in agreement' with the Russian Opposition."¹⁸

Together with disagreements over the nature of the Soviet Union, Urbahns and his friends disagreed with Trotsky on the nature of the Opposition. Urbahns was "premature" in coming to the conclusion that the Left Opposition should be a rival party to the Comintern and not consider itself a "faction" of that Stalin-dominated organization, a conclusion which Trotsky was not to reach for almost four years.

In the document we have been referring to Trotsky observed that "it is beyond doubt that at the bottom of many of Comrade Urbahns's mistakes is his incorrect attitude toward the official Communist Party. To regard the Communist Party—not its apparatus of functionaries but its proletarian core and the masses that follow it—as a finished, dead and buried organization is to fall into sectarianism. As a revolutionary faction, the Leninbund could have played a big role. But it cut off its own road to growth by its pretensions, which to say the least are not justified, to play the role of a second

party."¹⁹ Later, Trotsky added that "it must be clearly understood that the Leninbund is a faction and not a party. Hence flows a definite policy toward the party [especially during elections]."²⁰

Finally, Trotsky accused Urbahns and the Leninbund leadership of a kind of nationalism disguised as a criticism of the "bureaucracy" of Trotsky and those closest to him. Trotsky noted, that "I am very much afraid that Comrade Urbahns's conduct is not dictated by his desire to intervene actively in Russian affairs—which could only be welcomed—but, on the contrary, by his desire to keep the German Opposition separate and apart from the Russian. We must watch vigilantly lest under the guise of struggle against bureaucratism there intrench themselves within the Left Opposition tendencies of nationalistic isolationism and ideological separatism, which in turn would lead inescapably to bureaucratic degeneration—only not on an international but national scale."²¹

As the controversy with Urbahns increased, Trotsky sent various personal and political friends from other countries to try to help sort out the German situation and aid in the establishment of a really Trotskyist Opposition "faction" in Germany. The first to go to Berlin was Alfred Rosmer, then Trotsky's closest associate in France. He reported to Trotsky in a letter dated August 4, 1929, that "the long interview with Urbahns and several members of his Central Committee has been painful and unpleasant."²² He also observed that "in his Central Committee he behaves like a perfect autocrat, communicating what he wishes, deciding everything himself, and no one has the fortitude to resist him."²³ Rosmer concluded that Urbahns was "very dangerous for us, and not likely to change." He suggested to Trotsky that the best way to "gather around us the good elements of the Leninbund and the comrades alienated from us by the policy of Urbahns" would be to start publication of a German-language journal from Paris which would be critical of Urbahns and

some other dissident German Oppositionists without breaking openly with the Leninbund.²⁴

Trotsky also asked Kurt Landau, a young Austrian whom Trotsky had invited to come to Prinkipo to be his German-language secretary but who had refused the invitation, to go to Germany to try to straighten out the problems of the German Opposition. According to Hans Schafranek, "Trotsky asked Landau to bring about in Germany the organizational reunification of the Left Oppositionists, in the center of the struggle against fascism, the rise of which the Komintern was neglecting in a criminal fashion." Landau went to Berlin in September 1929.²⁵

Alfred Rosmer had originally planned to bring Landau to Paris to help him put out a German-language edition of an international Trotskyist periodical. When Trotsky asked Landau to go to Berlin, Rosmer wrote to Trotsky, "You take Landau from me and I cannot complain. It is certain that, in the present situation, he can be more useful in Berlin than in Paris. I have just received a letter from him in which he recounts what he has done. He already has around him a base in the Leninbund . . . who can change the political line of the Leninbund. In any case, Urbahns doesn't any longer have absolute power . . . and the existence of a minority will oblige a certain amount of wisdom on his part. . . ."²⁶

By early 1930 the conflict between Trotsky and Urbahns had reached the point that Trotsky wrote an "Open Letter to All Members of the Leninbund." Trotsky argued that Urbahns and his colleagues were isolated internationally and denounced Urbahns's expulsion of two of Trotsky's adherents, Anton Grylewicz and Jako (Joseph Kohn, an Austrian member of the group). He concluded by saying that "these questions are far more important than the petty squabbles on which Urbahns bases his prosecutor's indictment. The fate of your organization is at stake. Every member of the Leninbund should understand that follow-

ing the split in the Leninbund it will become completely transformed into an Urbahnsbund, that is, a tiny national sect, without any importance, without a future, without perspectives. This means that a choice must be made. And for a genuine revolutionist it is not so very difficult to choose!"²⁷

Maurice Stobnicer has noted that after the split of the Trotskyists from the Leninbund it "lost importance rapidly." He adds that "in fact, in spite of the heroism of certain of its militants, the Leninbund could not avoid becoming a little sect without influence and above all without historic continuity."²⁸

The Struggle Against Nazism

The United Opposition

The place of the Leninbund in the International Left Opposition was taken by the United Opposition. This was formed by dissidents from the Leninbund and members of the so-called Wedding Opposition. The unification of these groups was not easy, and even after it was achieved it proved to be difficult to maintain.

The Wedding Opposition consisted of a group of Communists in the working-class Wedding section of Berlin led by Alexander Muller and Hans Weber. They had been in contact with the Russian Opposition since at least 1927 and for some time had been the only part of the German party which had maintained relations with the Soviet opponents of Stalin.²⁹

During his visit to Germany in the summer of 1929, Alfred Rosmer had made contact with the Wedding Opposition. At that time he reported that its members in Berlin had been "dispersed," but that they had a group of colleagues in Pfals in the Palatinate with 300 members.³⁰

The Wedding Opposition was much closer to Trotsky than the Leninbund, which was, after all, of Zinovievist origin, but the merger of the Wedding Opposition with the pro-Trotskyist elements of the Le-

ninbund was not easy to carry out. There was opposition to unity from both sides.

Nevertheless, early in March 1930 Trotsky, in reporting to his Russian comrades, said that "in Germany the Marxist Left Opposition has finally dissolved its ties with the Urbahns faction through a split in the Leninbund. Within the next few days, its Marxist wing is expected to unite once and for all with the Wedding group (a platform for unity has been worked out), and to undertake the publication of a weekly."³¹

This unification of the pro-Trotsky elements of the German Left Opposition took place at a conference on March 30, 1930, when it formed the United Left Opposition of Germany (v.l.o.). The unity conference was attended by Pierre Naville of the French Trotskyist movement and the American Max Shachtman. The latter had just come from a visit to Trotsky in Prinkipo.³²

Trotsky had doubts about the solidity of the new organization which in view of later developments were rather prophetic. On April 3 he wrote a Russian supporter, Valentin Olberg, who was active in the German movement:

I don't want just now to go back over the conflicts that preceded unification and delayed it for a number of weeks. I don't at all think that *only* the opposition of the Leninbund was to blame. Quite recently I received letters against the unification from very responsible members of the Wedding group. Without a doubt there exist in both the former and the latter not a few elements embittered and poisoned by the past . . . it is absolutely clear that the main difficulties, not only those of a general political nature . . . but also those relating to the merging of the two groups, are still to come. It is extremely important that within the unified Opposition a nucleus of 'unity patriots' be formed, composed, of course, of the best representatives of both old groups. A body of opinion within the United Opposition must

be formed which will reject any intrigues by groups of individuals. In case of imminent danger, timely internal measures must be taken, and, if need be, you should resort to the aid of representatives of the International Opposition.³³

Two of the most important figures in the new United Opposition were Anton Grylewicz and Oscar Siepold. Grylewicz was a metal worker by trade and had been a leader of the Left within the German Communist Party, and one of the planners of the abortive revolution of 1923. He had been a founder of the Leninbund but had fought first against the leadership of Ruth Fischer and Maslow, and then against that of Urbahns, arguing consistently for the positions of Trotsky on various issues.

Oscar Siepold was a naturalized German citizen of Russian origin and a German Communist Party (KPD) member who had been an alternate deputy to the Prussian Landtag. When the deputy whose alternate he was, B. Meyer, died, Siepold succeeded to his seat on February 9, 1930. Two weeks later on February 22, when he refused the Communist Party's demand that he resign the post, he was expelled from the KPD.³⁴ He immediately joined the United Opposition when it was formed and he was the only Trotskyist provincial legislator in Europe at that point. (The Chilean and Belgian groups were the only Trotskyists to have national legislators in the 1930s.)

Maurice Stobnicer has noted the elements which entered the United Left Opposition at its inception. "The former Leninbundists, grouped around Anton Grylewicz and Jako (Joseph Kohn) were particularly important in Berlin, where the split with the Leninbund involved about fifty percent of the members. . . . In Berlin, the Left Opposition was present in all of the wards, particularly Charlottenberg, where Oskar Hippe led a group of more than forty Trotskyists." Shortly, Leninbund groups from Frankfurt/Main led by Fritz Belleville, from Hamburg

headed by Georg Jungclas, and from Königsberg, Hamborn, and other centers joined the United Left Opposition.

Second, there was a group formed at the end of 1929 in Leipzig led by Ruvim and Avram Sobolevicius (Roman Well and Adolf Senin), described by Stobnicer as being "not very numerous but very active." That group was soon joined by Erwin Ackerknecht (Erwin or Eugen Bauer), a former Young Communist leader.³⁵

A third group was the Wedding Opposition, both in Berlin and in the Palatinate. In the latter area it had groups in Ludwigshafen, Kaiserslautern, Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Neustadt, and other cities.³⁶

Soon after its foundation the United Opposition began to gain some influence within the Communist Party, many of whose members were disoriented by the attacks of the KPD on the Social Democrats in the name of the "theory of social fascism," and in the face of the sudden and dramatic rise in the strength of the Nazis. Ten delegates to a conference of the Wedding section of the KPD in May 1930 signed a resolution of the Trotskyists. When the KPD expelled those delegates from the conference, thirty others openly protested. The Trotskyists also made some headway in the Communist "transmission belts," the League of Free Thinkers and Red Aid, as well as in the Construction Workers Federation.³⁷

Although having its principal strength in the beginning in the Berlin region and the Palatinate, the United Opposition gained adherents and local branches in several other parts of the country. In a letter of February 1931 Leon Trotsky noted having received communications from Opposition comrades in Hamburg and Saxony.³⁸ In that same document Trotsky commented that "the Leipzig organization is the strongest and most active organization of the Left Opposition in Germany. The positive features of this organization are indisputable: active and successful attempts to penetrate into the ranks of the party; proletarian activity;

organizational initiative. In general, just those qualities that the Opposition has been lacking until now."³⁹

The Defection of Kurt Landau

It was Kurt Landau, the youngish Trotskyist from Austria who had been instrumental in organizing the United Opposition, who was to be the first important defector from it. He had been elected to the provisional national directorate of the United Opposition and was particularly active in editing its periodical, *Der Kommunist*. Shortly after the formation of the German United Opposition Landau was chosen to represent it in the International Bureau established at the first conference of the International Left Opposition in Paris.⁴⁰ Maurice Stobnicer has noted that "with good reason, Landau passed then, in the years 1929-30, as Trotsky's man in Berlin, as his accredited representative. . . ."⁴¹

However, in a meeting of the leadership of the United Opposition in June 1930 Ruvim Sobolevicius (or Sobolevitch) opened a strong attack on Landau, accusing him of "panic" in the face of the gains by the Nazis and predicting a change in the line of the KPD. Many years later it became known that Sobolevicius (who used the name Roman Well in the German Trotskyist movement and many years later was known in the United States as Robert Soblen) had been an agent of the Soviet secret police, probably since 1927. There is considerable reason to believe, therefore, that Well's assault on Landau had as its real purpose the sowing of dissension within the German Trotskyist ranks.⁴² If that was the case, it certainly succeeded.

At the same June 1930 meeting Well insisted on including in the leadership of the United Opposition Jakob Frank (also known as Max Graf), like Sobolevicius-Well of Lithuanian origin, who was likewise later shown to have been a GPU agent.⁴³ Well, who succeeded in rallying others to his point of view,

continued his attack on Landau. Although in October 1930 Landau's place in the International Bureau was reconfirmed, the attacks on him did not cease. As a consequence, Landau used his influence within the leadership to demote some of his opponents and expell others. But this did not end the factional fighting.⁴⁴

Trotsky finally threw his total support behind the Well faction and against Landau. He did so in a document, "The Crisis in the German Left Opposition," which he addressed as "A Letter to all Sections of the International Left," dated February 17, 1931.

Trotsky's onslaught on Kurt Landau was clearly influenced by disagreements between the two men on issues outside of Germany. Trotsky started his "Letter" with a long attack on the "Mahnruf Group" in Austria, with which Landau had been associated before going to Germany (on Trotsky's request), objected to Landau's continued backing of that group, and also strongly criticized Landau for supporting "the minority" in the French Left Opposition, apparently meaning Alfred Rosmer and his followers.

Thereafter, Trotsky gave his assessment of the situation in the German organization. He started out by attacking the quality of leadership which Landau had provided up until that point. On this, he said,

The misfortune of the Berlin Executive, led by Comrade Landau, is that it has not and could not attain even the slightest authority. It is sufficient to recall the fact that this Executive held an extremely miserable conference in October, which did not adopt a resolution on a single important question. There are not many such examples in the history of revolutionary organizations! The weakness of the Executive on questions of real revolutionary leadership is obvious. This weakness is entirely comprehensible in itself. Lack of preparation and experience can be overcome only in the course of time. However, the deep mistake of the Execu-

tive and particularly of Comrade Landau consists in the fact that the less its leadership gives to the organization, the more blind obedience it demands from it.⁴⁵

In contrast, Trotsky praised Well and his associates. After citing Landau's earlier favorable comments on Well, Trotsky said that "it is clear that Landau, with his characterization, considers Well a revolutionary, firm in principle and destined for a leading role. A more praiseworthy characterization can hardly be given."⁴⁶

Trotsky also strongly defended Jan Frankel, one of his former secretaries, who was associated with Well. He wrote that "in replying to the letter of Comrade Frankel with little twists, Comrade Landau, as is always the method in unprincipled struggle, seeks to discredit Frankel personally: a green student, Trotsky's secretary, etc. If I am not mistaken, Comrade Landau belongs to the same category of *employees* as Frankel . . . the difference consists in this—that the letter of Frankel contains indisputable facts and political criticism, whereas Landau's reply is full of tricks and insinuations."⁴⁷

Trotsky also attacked Landau for allegedly refusing to engage in discussion of ideological and programmatic differences, and resorting instead to disciplinary action against Well and his supporters. Finally, Trotsky suggested a line of procedure to solve the crisis within the German Opposition.

Trotsky's proposals were:

1. It is necessary to put a stop to all reprisals, expulsions, and removals in connection with the factional struggle in the German Opposition . . .
2. A special Control Commission, as authoritative as possible, must cooperate with the International Secretariat in examining the appeal made by the comrades . . . who have already been expelled, and give its decision.
3. The conference must be prepared in advance in such a manner that the mode of representation will allow no ground for

suspicious and accusations. 4. In all cases where organizational conflicts and objections come to the fore, an examination must be referred to the International Secretariat. . . . 5. The *Kommunist* must open its columns to the articles of both groups for discussion. The theses and countertheses for the German national conference must be published in the International Bulletin in several languages, not less than four weeks before the opening of the conference.⁴⁸

However, Trotsky's intervention on behalf of the Well faction did not resolve the schism within the so-called United Opposition. The International Secretariat (IS) also intervened by sending Pierre Frank, the righthand man of Raymond Molinier in the French organization and member of the IS, to Berlin. But in spite of Frank's mission, the German Opposition split on May 31, 1931.⁴⁹

The faction of the former United Opposition led by Landau, of which Hans Schwalback and Alexander Muller were also important figures, continued to publish *Der Kommunist*. It had only about 300 members. The group attempted to put into practice the policy of the united front, particularly during the transport strike in Berlin in November 1932. With the advent of the Nazis to power the Landau group held an illegal conference in March 1933 where it was decided to issue an underground periodical, *Der Funke*, which gained circulation among not only some elements of the Communist Party but also among adherents of the left-wing Social Democratic group, the Socialist Workers Party (saw). However, by July 1934 the Landau group had been virtually liquidated by the Gestapo.⁵⁰

Landau also sought to establish an international organization of dissident Trotskyist parties and groups. A conference was held in Berlin in April 1932 of delegates from groups in Germany, Austria, France, Hungary, Greece, the United States, Belgium,

and Italy.⁵¹ Nothing permanent seems to have resulted from this meeting.

*The United Opposition After
Landau's Departure*

After the split of Kurt Landau, who took the organization's newspaper with him, the United Opposition began to publish another periodical, *Die Permanente Revolution*.⁵² Writing "A Letter to the National Sections" in December 1931, half a year after Landau's split, Leon Trotsky wrote of the German Opposition that "it is precisely in recent times that it has experienced a serious growth and is becoming an extraordinarily important factor in the policy of the German working class. The main reasons, naturally, lie in the objective conditions. . . . The present situation in Germany also demonstrates very graphically how important it was for the International Left Opposition to free itself at the right time from alien elements and ambiguous travelling companions," meaning both the Urbahns and Landau groups.⁵³

In this same letter Trotsky wrote a "PS" in which he said, "If it is true that Germany is at the present time the key to the international situation, the conclusion follows that the main link of the ILO (International Left Opposition) now is the German section. It lacks financial and technical means. If a weekly paper is especially needed anywhere, then it is in Germany. The demand for the Opposition press in the circle of the German workers increases rapidly. There is no doubt that a weekly paper would have wide circulation. All the sections must set themselves the task: to help the German section issue a weekly organ."⁵⁴

In December 1932, during his short visit to Copenhagen, Trotsky was able to enter into personal contact with some German followers. Among the Left Oppositionists from various countries who conferred with Trotsky in the Danish capital were at least ten or eleven from Germany: "Anton Gry-

lewicz, Eugen Bauer, Georg Jungclas, Bruno, Oskar Hippe, Helmuth Schneeweiss, Eric Kohn and three or four Hamburg students. . . . Trotsky also had a discussion with Senin-Sobolevicius, an East European active in Germany."⁵⁵

On his meeting with his German friends, Trotsky wrote in his report "On the State of the Left Oppositions" that "the reports of the German comrades, as well as the composition of the delegation, have proved beyond a doubt that in the ranks of the German section there exists a serious cadre of working-class Communists who are adequately qualified politically and at the same time are connected with mass organizations. That is a very great achievement from which we must start and build further. In the first place, we must assure a composition of the leadership which is more proletarian and more bound up with the masses."⁵⁶ In Copenhagen, Trotsky also was made acutely aware of the fact that the German organization was still suffering from internal dissension. His "discussion" with Avram Sobolevicius dealt with this problem.

This time, it was Roman Well (Ruvyn Sobolevicius) and his brother Avram whom Trotsky had supported so strongly a few months before in his quarrel with Kurt Landau, who were at the root of the dissidence. In his report "On the State of the Opposition," Trotsky complained about this new outbreak of factionalism, which centered on the relationship the Trotskyists should have with the KPD and about the fact that too much publicity was being given to the quarrel in the newspaper *Die Permanente Revolution*.⁵⁷

Trotsky tried to assuage the situation among his German followers. In a communication to "the Leadership of the German Left Opposition," he noted that Senin had complained to him in Copenhagen that his brother felt slighted by Trotsky, "claiming that I corresponded only with his opponents and not with him." Trotsky added that in a letter he had given Senin, "I proposed . . .

to call a calm, harmonious conference of action, without having a suspicion of the differences of opinion recently formulated by Well," and noted that "I have long ago seen that he takes a vacillating position on many questions."

Trotsky then observed that "what Well is now putting in question is nothing else than the right to existence of the Left Opposition. He, Well, thinks everything will go well enough even without Bolshevik-Leninists, and that between Stalin and the Kremlin and Trotsky and Barnaul there exist little misunderstandings because all of them fail to understand his, Well's ideas. . . ."⁵⁸

Finally, in January 1933, a few days before Hitler came to power, Well put out a counterfeit issue of *Die Permanente Revolution* supporting the positions of the German Communist Party, which he officially joined.⁵⁹ As his later career indicated, Well's abandonment of the ranks of the Trotskyists did not end his service to the Soviet secret police.

Size of German Trotskyism Before Hitler

German Trotskyism remained a small movement in the period before the advent of Hitler to power, although it was fairly widely dispersed around the country. Maurice Stobnicer has noted that the Internal Bulletin of the organization claimed at the end of 1932 that it had at most 706 members, a figure which was confirmed by the police. Stobnicer has added that "this was perhaps augmented a little after the arrival of Hitler in power." He cited Anton Grylewicz as authority for saying that the strongest contingents were in Berlin, with sixty members, Leipzig with sixty, and Hamburg with "a strong group." The largest local organization of all was in Bruchsal, where there were 100 members of the Trotskyite group. There were in addition cells of "from fifty to fifteen militants" in Orianenburg, Magdeburg, Kaiserslautern, Essen, Solingen, Wuppertal,

Remscheid, Dresden, Mautzon, Hamburg, and Ludwigshafen.⁶⁰

Given the small size of their organization, the German Trotskyists did a good job of distributing their periodical and other publications. The newspaper *Permanente Revolution* was printed generally with a run of 5,000 copies, of which 3,000 were sold by subscription. Stobnicer has noted that it was not so much the prose of Landau, Well, Bauer, Grylewicz, and others which the readers sought in the Trotskyist press. "It was above all the pen, the vigorous style and the brilliant analysis of Trotsky himself which interested very large elements of the German labor movement." This was particularly clear in the sales of pamphlets by Trotsky. Tens of thousands of copies were sold, and Stobnicer has commented that "Trotsky is undoubtedly a best seller. . . ."⁶¹

The Struggle for the United Front

The German Trotskyists concentrated much attention and propaganda during the 1930-1933 period on trying to convince leaders and members of the Social Democratic and Communist parties to join forces in a United Front to confront the growing Nazi menace. In these efforts they particularly had to deal with the "Third Period" sectarianism of the KPD and the Comintern.

The Stalinist line during this period centered on three basic notions. First, the Social Democrats were "social fascists," in no fundamental way distinguishable from the Nazis, and in view of their influence among the workers they were more dangerous than the Nazis. So KPD attacks had to be centered on the SPD and not the Nazi Party. Second, from 1930 on the KPD and Comintern insisted that fascism already existed in Germany from the time the Brüning government began in mid-1930 to govern by decree laws, and therefore the idea of a United Front to prevent the advent of the Nazis to power was meaningless. Finally, the KPD-CI argued that the victory of the Communist Party

as the denouement of the prerevolutionary situation which existed between 1930 and January 30, 1933, was inevitable, and the KPD needed no allies to achieve that victory.

In contrast, Leon Trotsky and his German followers, although agreeing with the Stalinists that the SPD had "betrayed" the German working class and the revolution, insisted nonetheless that the Social Democrats were a part (still the largest part) of the working class and that they would be as much the victim of the victorious Nazis' effort to destroy all of the workers' organizations as would the KPD. Therefore, it was in the interest of both the KPD and SPD to join forces to fight the Nazi rise to power. Furthermore, it would only be in the process of joint action of the Communists and Social Democrats that the former could convince the rank-and-file Social Democrats of the nature and depth of their own leaders' betrayal of the revolution.

The Trotskyists also insisted that a distinction had to be made between the regime of Heinrich Brüning, and even those of Franz von Papen and Kurt von Schleicher (1932-1933) and a government controlled by the Nazis. Particularly in the case of the Brüning government, it stayed in office due to the tolerance of the Social Democrats and therefore its ability to impose on the workers the full brunt of the effects of the Depression was limited; whereas a triumphant Nazi regime would have nothing to hold it back from ruthlessly destroying the organizations of the workers.

Needless to say, appeals of Trotsky and his followers went largely unheeded by either Stalinists or Social Democrats. The KPD even went so far on several occasions as to work together with the Nazis against the Social Democrats and the unions under their control, actions which were denounced by the Trotskyists.⁶²

Only in a handful of localities were the Trotskyists successful in gaining support for the United Front idea. In Bruchsal (where the Trotskyists were the only existing Com-

munist organization) they formed a united front with the Social Democrats. In Orianenburg they were able to convince the KPD and SPD to form a local United Front.⁶³ Meanwhile, Oscar Siepold, the Trotskyist member of the Prussian Landtag, used every opportunity to push the United Front message.⁶⁴ In the elections of the 1930-33 period the Trotskyists supported the nominees of the Communist Party instead of running their own candidates even where that might have been feasible, thus demonstrating both their support of the United Front and their role as a Communist "opposition," not a separate party.⁶⁵

Toward a New Communist Party of Germany

With the demise of the Weimar Republic under the blows of the Nazis after January 30, 1933, and the almost total lack of resistance to this by the German Communist Party, Leon Trotsky made a fundamental alteration in his revolutionary strategy. He concluded that reform of the KPD was impossible and that it was necessary to establish a new German Communist Party as a rival to and not a "faction" of the KPD, associated with the Stalinist-controlled Comintern. This presaged the generalization of this idea which was soon to lead to work for formation of a Fourth International.

On March 12, 1933 Trotsky addressed a document entitled "KPD or New Party" to the International Secretariat of his movement, setting forth his new position. In this he wrote that "German Stalinism is collapsing now, less from the blows of the fascists than from its internal rottenness. Just as a doctor does not leave a patient who still has a breath of life, we had for our task the reform of the party as long as there was the least hope. But it would be criminal to tie oneself to a corpse. The KPD today represents a corpse. The scorn of the vanguard of the German workers for the bureaucracy which has deceived them will be so great that the

slogan of reform will seem false and ridiculous to them. They will be right. The hour has struck! The question of preparing for the creation of a new party must be posed openly."⁶⁶

There was considerable resistance within German Trotskyism to the idea that the Trotskyists' mission had become that of building an entirely new Communist Party instead of reforming the existing one. Pierre Broué has noted that "his German comrades—those who had remained and fought in the underground—were not convinced that the moment had come for the struggle for a 'new party' and they refused to follow Jan Frankel who sought to get them on that path." In a resolution, they cited against Trotsky the position of the February 1933 "preconference" of the International Left Opposition which had "reaffirmed loyalty to the line of 'faction' and its condemnation of that of a 'new party.'"⁶⁷ This resolution was passed at a clandestine convention of the United Opposition at Leipzig on March 12.⁶⁸

Reflecting their doubts about Trotsky's new course, the German Trotskyists submitted to the International Secretariat a "draft resolution" which contained many reservations about Trotsky's position. In his reply to this document, Trotsky perhaps summed up his own argument best when he said that "it is not a matter of our decreeing bureaucratically the creation of a new party, but of proclaiming openly our position towards the old party and our new perspective for work. It would be impermissible to diminish or to mask the significance of this turn. *Our course is one of propaganda for a new party and preparation for it.* It is necessary to speak out clearly and openly about this change. . . ."⁶⁹

At a conference of the German Trotskyists in March 1933 there were three points of view expressed. Jan Frankel, Trotsky's representative, supported Trotsky's position favoring a new German Communist Party; Erwin Bauer favored maintenance of

the role as an "opposition" to the KPD; Heinz Epe (Walter Held) argued in favor not only of working for a new German Communist Party but also for a new Communist International. The discussion in the German ranks went on until July by which time they had been won over to Trotsky's position.⁷⁰ Maurice Stobnicer has noted that "finally, the German Left Opposition made the turn with reticence and hesitation, but without damage. No scission, no withdrawals weakened it."⁷¹

Later in 1933 Trotsky extended the idea of a new Communist Party in Germany. By the middle of the year he had become convinced that it was necessary to build rivals to Stalinist-dominated Communist parties everywhere, including the Soviet Union, as well as to establish a new Fourth International to rival the Third, completely subordinated to Stalin.

German Trotskyism Under Hitler

German Trotskyism Underground

With the coming of the Nazis to power, the German Trotskyist movement was almost immediately forced to go underground. Only two national meetings of the group were held in Germany under the Nazis. One was a national conference which met in Leipzig on March 12, 1933. There the main topic of discussion was Trotsky's conversion to the idea of converting the Left Opposition into a rival party of the KPD.⁷² The second and last meeting was an "organizational conference" held in Berlin in March 1934.⁷³

With some advice from Trotsky, the German group soon adopted the "cell" type of organization, each cell consisting of five members. Only one person in each cell would maintain contact with someone in another cell, similarly designated as a liaison. This was designed to prevent anyone from knowing too many people who were still active so that in case of being arrested

by the Gestapo any member could only cause a limited amount of damage to the organization if he/she broke down.⁷⁴

Under these forced conditions of isolation the maintenance of a press was essential for the continuation of any kind of effective organization at all. The last issue of *Permanente Revolution* was published in mid-February 1933 in Germany. But early in March an exile publication, *Unser Wort* (*Our Word*), began to appear, first in Prague, then from August 1933 in Paris, and ultimately in New York City. For some time the Trotskyist underground network was able to distribute between 1,500 and 2,000 copies per issue of *Unser Wort*.

The exiled leadership also began to publish in 1935 a monthly discussion bulletin, the circulation of which was supposed to be limited to members. At least for a while there also appeared (generally mimeographed) local periodicals in Berlin, the Rhineland, Mainz, Frankfurt/Main, and Magdeburg. However, Stobnicer has noted that "most of these publications clearly had only a very limited distribution and appeared irregularly."⁷⁵

The banner of *Unser Wort* reflected the changes in orientation through which German Trotskyism passed in the period following the Nazi triumph. The first issue identified it as the organ of the "Left Opposition of the KPD-Bolshevik-Leninists." A month later the identification was as "Bimonthly of the German Section of the International Left Opposition." Finally, after the International Left Opposition Plenum of August 1933 the paper was identified as being the organ of the German Internationalist Communists (Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands—IKD).⁷⁶

The man who first led the Trotskyist underground right after the Nazis came to power was Erwin Ackerknecht, more widely known by his pseudonym Eugen Bauer. As we have noted, he had first opposed the "new turn" toward regarding the IKD as a rival party to the KPD, but his conversion to

the idea was decisive in assuring its acceptance by the underground organization.

Bauer had been a member of the International Secretariat when it had been located in Berlin, before the Nazis came to power. When the is was moved to Paris Bauer followed it there after some delay. He first went to visit Trotsky in Prinkipo, whence he announced his final conversion to the policy of the "new turn."⁷⁷

For almost a year, Bauer served as Administrative Secretary of the International Secretariat in Paris.⁷⁸ However, he developed a strong difference of opinion with Trotsky over relations with the German Socialist Workers Party, the SAP. He advocated that the German Trotskyists enter the SAP. The difference between Bauer and Trotsky on this was sufficiently great that Bauer's followers within Germany were not invited to a conference of German Trotskyists held in Dietikon, Switzerland, in December 1934. Bauer finally joined the SAP.⁷⁹

The IKD in Exile

The last full-scale national conference of the Trotskyists to meet in Germany in March 1933 elected an Exile Committee (Auslandkomitee—AK) of eight members. These were Erwin Ackerknecht (Erwin or Eugen Bauer), Oskar Fischer (Otto Schussler), N. Braun (Erwin Wolf), Johre (Josef Weber), Schmidt (Willy Schauschkowitz), Eiffel, Staal, and Otto Lehmann (Samuel Hundert). Subsequently, they were joined in Paris by Jan Frankel and Rudolf Klement. Most of these people had been leaders of local Opposition groups in various parts of Germany.

Maurice Stobnicer has noted that "the task of the Auslandkomitee is to secure the political leadership of the IKD, to maintain liaison with the other members of the emigration and, something much more delicate, with local groups in Germany. Above all, it was charged with assuring the regular appearance and distribution of *Unser Wort*."⁸⁰

The man responsible for launching *Unser*

Wort was Heinz Epe, better known as Walter Held, leader of the United Opposition in Remscheid, who fled to Prague where he began publishing the new journal. He soon moved to Paris with the newspaper, after a new press law in Czechoslovakia made it very difficult to publish an exile periodical there.⁸¹ He visited Trotsky and in December 1933 settled in Amsterdam.⁸² *Unser Wort* meanwhile was published for some time in Antwerp, Belgium.

Pierre Broué has noted that *Unser Wort* "in the emigration and in Germany was regularly distributed and had a real audience." He has observed, too, that subsequent to the collapse of the German Communist Party a number of important converts from the KPD were won over to the idea of establishing a new Fourth International. These included Maria Reese, a former member of the Reichstag, and Felix Wolf, a former representative of the Comintern in Germany.⁸³ However, there is no indication that either of these people formally joined the Trotskyist Opposition either within Germany or in exile. Maria Reese ultimately joined the Nazis.⁸⁴

Some other KPD leaders both expressed support for the Fourth International and joined the Trotskyist movement. These included Erich Wollemborg and Karl Grohl. Wollemborg had been a leader of the short-lived Communist regime in Bavaria in 1919; subsequently he had been a major figure in the paramilitary underground organization of the German Communist Party and an editor of the KPD paper, *Die Rote Fahne*. He had been eliminated from the newspaper editorial staff in August 1932 because of his criticisms of KPD policy, had been summoned to the USSR in December, and expelled from the KPD in April 1933. He succeeded in getting out of the Soviet Union in July 1934 and joined the German Left Opposition. He became a frequent contributor to the Trotskyist press in several countries.

Karl Grohl [known in the KPD as Hans—

or Karl?—Friedberg and in the IKD as Karl Erde) had also been a leader in the Bavarian Communist regime, and subsequently active in the KPD paramilitary underground. In 1930 he secretly joined the German Left Opposition, but in 1933 was sent by the KPD to help lead the party in the Saar region. At that point the Saar was separated from Germany in conformity with the Versailles Treaty, with an autonomous regime linked economically with France. Grohl visited Trotsky in France in 1933.⁸⁵

One of the most important groups of German Trotskyist refugees was that in Antwerp. Ernest Mandel has written of them that "the German refugees in Antwerp who formed a Trotsky group since 1935 (or even 1934) were one of the central groups of the IKD. They were responsible for publishing *Unser Wort* first, *The Revolution Betrayed* later and finally *Der Einzige Weg*. They were the closest collaborators of Johre, the central leader of the IKD. The leading figure among them was a comrade called Brink, who had some correspondence with Trotsky himself."⁸⁶

The Maslow-Fischer Issue

In 1934 a new German element joined the international Trotskyist movement. This was the International Group, which Arkady Maslow and Ruth Fischer had founded and led after leaving the Leninbund.⁸⁷

Trotsky was very anxious to incorporate Maslow and Fischer fully into his movement. They had been the top leaders of the German Communist Party and were recruits of major significance to International Trotskyism. However, the IKD refused to accept them into their organization.

Trotsky found at least a temporary way out of this situation by bringing Maslow and Fischer into the top leadership of the international movement. From 1934 on Ruth Fischer was accepted as a "consultative member" of the International Secretariat.⁸⁸ Then in March 1935 Trotsky proposed to a

plenum of the IS that she be made a full member.

In a letter dated January 31, 1935, addressed to the forthcoming plenum, Trotsky gave his reasons for incorporating Fischer (whom he referred to as Dubois) in the organization: "Comrade Dubois is a very experienced comrade with a past of struggle and of experience. He [sic] adhered to us in a difficult situation, which is a mark of revolutionary sincerity. The cadres of experienced comrades that we possess are not numerous. It is necessary to know how to utilize them. It is necessary to reinforce the plenum by a comrade who will surely be able to contribute an individual note to our discussions and an effective collaboration. Comrade Dubois knows the movement in different countries and commands three languages. His knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon movement and of the English language will be of great use to us."⁶⁹

Trotsky was not oblivious to the opposition of his German comrades to admission of Fischer and Maslow (Parabellum) to the movement. He wrote that "the German leadership did not want to have either Parabellum . . . or Dubois. Bauer accused them of having wrong ideas on the permanent revolution. The German leadership supported Bauer in this affair. We saw later the firmness in principle of Bauer himself. It is quite possible that there are different nuances in our conceptions. But do we want an absolute monolithism? . . . We cannot impose collaboration with Comrades Parabellum and Dubois upon our German section. But we cannot, as an international organization, tolerate being deprived of a collaboration that we deem useful and necessary."⁷⁰

The March 1935 Plenum supported Trotsky's move. Those voting in favor of coopting Ruth Fischer into the International Secretariat were Leonetti, Lesoil, Sneevliet, and Trotsky. Those against were Molinier and Vereeken. "Craipeau's vote was judged 'not clear' and Cannon's did not arrive on time."⁷¹

Ruth Fischer remained a member of the International Secretariat through 1936, and Arkady Maslow became a member of the General Council of the Movement for a Fourth International (MFI) at its 1936 meeting. Both quit the MFI in 1937.⁷²

Trotsky and the Socialist Workers Party (SAP)

In seeking to build a new Communist Party in Germany Trotsky at first thought it might be possible to recruit all or part of the new Socialist Workers Party (SAP) to the ranks of his movement. The SAP had been established a bit more than a year before the advent of the Nazis to power by left-wing dissidents of the Social Democratic Party. By 1933 the leadership of the SAP was largely in the hands of people who had been members of the Right Opposition in the German Communist Party led by Heinrich Brandler and August Thalheimer, but had broken from the Brandler-Thalheimer Communist Party (Opposition), had merged with the SAP, and had soon captured control of it. Before the Nazis came to power, the SAP had several thousand members. Even in mid-1933 the SAP was considerably larger than the German Trotskyist group both inside the country and in the German exile community.

In an article of April 1933 on "The Left Opposition and the SAP," Trotsky argued that, "For my part, I am ready to do everything to facilitate mutual understanding and collaboration with the comrades of the SAP. But the first condition for this is an honest political understanding."⁷³

In an attempt to come to such an "understanding," Jakob Walcher (J. Schwab) and Paul Froehlich, two of the principal figures in the Socialist Workers Party, visited Trotsky in his exile home in France in August 1933.⁷⁴ Walcher-Schwab stayed with Trotsky for three days and after that visit Trotsky wrote him in a very optimistic tone, apparently very hopeful that the two groups could join forces.

In a letter dated August 18, 1933, Trotsky wrote Walcher that "undoubtedly, the work of the KPO minority within the SAP has been successful. But this success has got to be pushed further, or it will be dissipated. The Left Opposition, too, must take a leap to a higher level. Amalgamation of the two organizations will be the starting point of an important new chapter in their development." Trotsky argued that disagreements between the two groups were not insurmountable, and added that "naturally, the unification would have to take place on the basis of a programmatic document. . . . This important document could be produced by the unified forces of the two organizations, and since it would set forth the platform of the unification, it could serve as a manifesto to rally the forces to build the new party and the new International."⁹⁵

No such "honest political understanding" as Trotsky professed to seek developed between the Trotskyists and the SAP, although Jakob Walcher of the SAP became one of the signers of the Declaration of Four which called for the establishment of a Fourth International shortly after his visit to Trotsky. The SAP never merged with the German Left Opposition nor did the SAP join the Fourth International when it was ultimately established.

The SAPists came to the conclusion that, although a new International was required, Trotsky was trying to make that new organization fit more closely than they wished his own interpretation of theory and political practice, and to dominate personally any new International which might be organized.⁹⁶ For his part, Trotsky came to regard the SAP as the epitome of a "centrist" and ideologically confused organization.⁹⁷

Trotsky had given up hope by early 1934 of any possibility of merging the SAP with his own followers' German organization. He wrote on January 11, 1934, to a group of SAP members who had gotten in touch with him that "you are no doubt aware that, together with my closest German friends, I stood for

a merger as soon as possible with the SAP, hoping that the education of a unified organization would be hastened by our joint experience coupled with mutual criticism. But after initial vacillations, the leaders of the SAP have rejected the merger."⁹⁸

Trotsky therefore wrote his correspondents that "as matters stand today [through no fault of ours], you must choose between the League and the SAP . . . You are only bound to determine your own position. . . . Needless to say, I should like to . . . attract you to come over to our ranks."⁹⁹

Within Germany, many of Trotsky's followers were less willing than he to break off relations with the SAP. In some cases they apparently had good working contacts with them in the underground. The "organizational conference" of the clandestine IKD in March 1934 "reaffirmed the desire of the IKD to see a rapid fusion. . . ."¹⁰⁰

The IKD Before World War II

Late in 1935 the IKD engendered considerable controversy within the international Trotskyist movement. Naomi Allen and George Breitman have noted the origins of this: "In the third year of their rule, the German Nazis, having wiped out all other non-Nazi political, economic and cultural organizations, began to crack down hard on the Catholic and Protestant churches. The IKD . . . supported the church resistance against the German government as part of the defense of democratic rights. The IKD's Emigre Committee, consisting of the exiled leadership, met strong opposition to its point of view from members of other European sections, including ultraleftists who accused the IKD of betraying the proletarian class standpoint."

Allen and Breitman went on to note that "at Trotsky's suggestion, the ICL set up a German Commission to investigate the German situation and the IKD's policy." Having read the report of the commission, Trotsky "sought to eliminate the heat in the

controversy, but definitely support the IKD's position."¹⁰¹

In his "Letter to the German Commission," Trotsky made some recommendations concerning illegal work in Germany. He said that "we must orient toward work in the plants. However, since we are very weak, we should concentrate for a time on one plant or another until we establish a firm footing and from there gain workers . . . a sympathetic milieu . . . can only be found in the plants. From this vantage point the opportunities for combining legal and illegal work can be gradually learned and extended in practice."¹⁰²

A few weeks later Trotsky wrote to the Emigre Committee of the IKD, on September 2, 1935. In that letter he noted that materials he had received from the German Trotskyists "prove that we have cadres in Germany whose Marxist capabilities we can really be proud of. What the report from J—— says about the situation in the factories is very important."

He made observations also on the German Trotskyists' newspaper *Unser Wort*:

Possibly some German comrades still have too purely propagandistic an orientation. This is connected with the attitude taken by *Unser Wort*. The paper has to be strengthened. It has a base in Germany and with the intervention of our cadres we can expand it successfully. However, the prerequisite is that *Unser Wort* appear regularly, at least twice a month, and at least once a month with six pages. This would provide the opportunity to give two pages to more current, agitational themes, without disregarding theoretical questions and international information. Every issue should have . . . some columns filled with little notes . . . about the internal affairs of the workers' organizations. The German comrades are highly interested in these questions. . . .¹⁰³

In this same letter Trotsky commented on the order of the Emigre Committee to

the underground to break off all relations with the SAP. He claimed that "after brief consideration the comrades in Germany concurred with this necessary turn."¹⁰⁴

One part of the German Trotskyist organization gained international attention for a short period late in 1936 and early in 1937 when the leaders of its branch in the Free City of Danzig (Gdańsk) were brought to public trial in December 1936. Known locally as the Spartacus League but also as Internationalist Communists of Germany, Danzig Group (Trotskyists), the Danzig Trotskyists clearly regarded themselves as part of the German Trotskyist organization. Danzig had been separated from the rest of Germany as a consequence of the Versailles Treaty and established as a "Free City." Soon after the Nazis gained power in the German Republic they also won control of Danzig, and it was the Nazi regime in Danzig which brought the Trotskyists to trial.

The principal leader of the Danzig Trotskyists was Franz Jakubowski, who had been born in Poland in 1912. He became a Communist in 1932 and a Trotskyist in 1933. In the following year he moved to Danzig where he became head of the Spartacus League.¹⁰⁵

Late in 1936 the Nazi government of Danzig arrested sixty Trotskyists, of whom ten were finally tried. Documents were presented at their trial indicating that they thought of themselves as members of the German Trotskyist movement, that they had called for dock workers to refuse to send arms to the Franco insurrection in Spain, and that they had called on the workers of the Free City to "help us build a new Communist Party, which will give revolutionary leadership to the proletariat . . . build the Fourth International, which will lead the world revolution to victory."

The ten Trotskyists put on trial were convicted of subversive activities. They received a total of thirteen years imprisonment. Jakubowski got a sentence of three years and three months in jail.¹⁰⁶ He was

freed before the absorption of the Free State of Danzig by the Reich on the eve of World War II, fled to Denmark, then to Paris, Great Britain, and ultimately to the United States, where he disappeared from politics.¹⁰⁷

The IKD was represented at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International. However, the German delegation does not appear to have taken a very significant role in the discussions which took place during that one-day meeting.¹⁰⁸

At the subsequent Emergency Conference of the Fourth International held in New York in May 1940, information was offered concerning the strength of the German Trotskyists from the time of the Nazi conquest of power until the outbreak of World War II. This was presented in a "Report of the organization of the International Communists of Germany (IKDA)," which was an official document of the Emergency Conference.

This report said that "at the moment of taking of power by fascism, the German section had 1,000 members. Only fifty of them emigrated. In Germany itself, there was at the beginning a close contact between the groups and the leadership abroad. In spite of illegal conditions, *Unser Wort* was widely distributed. But after several years, normal relations with our comrades in Germany as well as among the groups was broken. One must judge that half of the militants have left. At least 150 were arrested. Of the others, we have received information, until the outbreak of the war, proving that they were far from abandoning the struggle and that they had prepared for the insurrection which will come."¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

German Trotskyism had begun in the last years of the Weimar Republic with some apparent possibility of gaining at least marginal influence on the Left of German politics. However, the Trotskyists had not been

able to consolidate their position before the advent of the Nazis to power.

The underground Trotskyist organization continued to exist for a few years after the Nazi triumph but was destroyed before the outbreak of World War II. The exile movement was able to continue to exist on a minimal level thereafter.

Throughout all of this period German Trotskyism was characterized by extensive factionalism. Several groups broke away from the main stream of the movement between 1929 and 1939; none of them was able to establish itself as a part of an important international radical tendency.

German Trotskyism During and After World War II

The onset of World War II, and particularly the rapid Nazi conquest of most of Europe in the middle months of 1940, almost destroyed and greatly demoralized what was left of the German Trotskyist movement. Although some of the exiled Trotskyists were able to escape from Europe and others continued to try to conduct some kind of underground activity in Nazi-occupied sections, the meager forces remaining to German Trotskyism by 1939 were further dispersed and disorganized.

During the war another factor developed which much complicated the task of rebuilding the Trotskyist movement in Germany after 1945. This was the fact that many of the surviving Trotskyists adopted positions which were, from the point of view of the mainstream of International Trotskyism, quite heretical. Thus, a large scale purge of what was left of the IKD became the order of the day even before significant efforts could be undertaken to try to reestablish the movement in postwar Germany. Of course, given the terrible conditions in Germany in the years immediately following the war such efforts would have been difficult in any case.

Yet a very modest movement—even in Trotskyist terms—was slowly rebuilt in the Federal Republic of Germany. It tended to suffer from the same kind of internal struggles which were characteristic of Trotskyism in other countries. Most of the factions into which International Trotskyism was divided after 1952–53 came to have their small groups in the German Federal Repub-

lic. Trotskyism has had no representation at all in East Germany.

The Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands

The IKD During World War II

The report on the German Internationalist Communists (IKD) to the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International in May 1940 presented a survey of the extent of the IKD exile organization during the early months of the war. It noted that “the organizational and administrative direction” of the German Trotskyist organization had been transferred to New York.

The report recounted that “the twenty comrades in France have all been interned. . . . The group of Antwerp, in Belgium, has until recent times functioned very well. . . . *Unser Wort* confided to it, but it had to renounce this responsibility, after the arrest of H. . . . Other comrades in Belgium and in Holland are in close contact with the Antwerp group. There are fifteen comrades in all.”

The report also noted existence of an IKD group in London—four people—as well as units in Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Oslo. The last of these was the only German group to endorse the Shachtmanite position in the split which had recently occurred in the Fourth International. There were also German IKD groups in Argentina, Bolivia, and Mexico. Finally, the report commented that “the publication of *Unser Wort*, bimonthly organ, is assured.”

Subsequently, the Nazi conquest of most of Western Europe made it very difficult for the German Trotskyists to maintain even the rudiments of an organization. One of the most spectacular activities of members of the IKD during the war was publication of *Arbeiter und Soldat*, a periodical designed to win supporters among the German soldiers of occupation in the Brest area in France. Although members of the French

Trotskyist underground had the major role in this effort, it could not have been carried out without the cooperation of German Trotskyists. Also, in the second phase of the publication of *Arbeiter und Soldat* it appeared as an official organ of the German Trotskyists.

One of the German Trotskyists involved in publishing *Arbeiter und Soldat* was Martin Monat, known in France as Paul Widelin and Victor, and earlier in Germany as Monte. He had originally been a Zionist in Germany, had joined the Trotskyist movement in exile in Belgium in 1935, and in May 1943 had gone to Paris where he had begun to work with the Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste and to lead the German Trotskyist group in the French capital.²

The other principal Germans involved with *Arbeiter und Soldat* were Paul and Clara Thalmann. According to the *Facsimile de La Verité*, Paul Thalmann "created with a group of militants of diverse nationalities the Union des Communistes Internationalistes." This document added that "the periodical was edited, copied, issued from a house of seven rooms which Clara and Paul Thalmann occupied on the Rue Friant and which became a veritable Tower of Babel."³

The periodical for German soldiers began to appear in July 1943. It was mimeographed, and continued to appear for about three months before the Gestapo was able to suppress it.⁴

Arbeiter und Soldat reappeared in April 1944, this time as the organ of the German Section of the Fourth International. Martin Monat was still in charge of its publication. Its last number, this time, appeared in July 1944. Monat was finally captured by the Gestapo and was executed a month before the entry of Allied troops into Paris.⁵

Generally, the contact of the German Trotskyist movement with its counterparts elsewhere in Europe and outside was tenuous during much of World War II. Whether due to this isolation or to other factors, the IKD developed attitudes toward the war and

toward theoretical issues which were to become the subject of bitter controversy as the war drew to an end, and led to the expulsion of many exiled German Trotskyist leaders from the movement after the conflict was over.

The key document in this controversy was entitled "Three Theses on the Situation in Europe and the Political Tasks of the IKD," dated October 19, 1941. Its principal heresy from the point of view of the international Trotskyist movement was its support of a "stages" theory with regard to the struggle against Nazi domination of Europe and the struggle for socialism.

The October 1941 resolution described at considerable length the Nazi conquest of the continent and the kind of resistances which had developed against Nazi (which the resolution always referred to as "German") domination. It then set forth the basic thesis which it was presenting.

This key part of the document stated, "The transition from fascism to socialism remains a utopia with an intermediary step—more or less prolonged—equivalent in its content to a democratic revolution. The advantage of the European situation is the following: the peoples are forced to take the road of national liberation and the struggle for . . . a complete program of transition which includes all the democratic demands, freedom of assembly, press, association, religion and the right of strike up to the right of peoples to control themselves."

The resolution went on to say that "it is a total error to believe that one can participate in political life while ignoring the democratic demands. It would be very dangerous to pretend that national liberation doesn't favor socialist interests."

The IKD resolution said with regard to struggle for "national liberation, nothing can free world socialism from the duty of stimulating this revolt, of preparing, learning to know all forms of struggle which give force to the movement, which permit the constitution of a revolutionary party and

have for their purpose giving the best results in a given situation. On the contrary, an abstract attitude with regard to the revolution, a defection on tactical questions of first or second order, can only lead to a new defeat."⁶

Background of Postwar Germany

With the total defeat of the Nazi regime in World War II it became possible once again to try to organize a Trotskyist movement in Germany, or at least in the Federal Republic. However, the reestablishment of even a small revolutionary movement of the Trotskyist type was made peculiarly difficult by the conditions in Germany in the period immediately following the war. The total nature of the German defeat resulted in division of the country into four different zones of military occupation, by the Soviet Union in the East, and the United States, Great Britain and France in the West, with even the old capital, Berlin, being similarly split.

Large segments of prewar Germany were lopped off completely, to be annexed by Poland and the Soviet Union. Millions of people from those areas fled to the Western occupation zones, together with millions of other German-speaking people from various East European nations who had been forcibly expelled, while the millions of "slave laborers" recruited by the Nazis during the war streamed home or into "displaced persons camps" if they had no "home" left, or did not want to return to it.

Amid this chaos and confusion there soon developed harrowing economic circumstances intensified by the great physical destruction resulting from the war itself. Massive unemployment, food supplies barely sufficient (if that) to the most basic requirements necessary to avoid starvation, rates of inflation which for some time resulted in the conversion of much of Germany into a barter economy rather than a market one, were some of the aspects of this crisis.

There had been no such workers' uprising

as the Trotskyists had hoped for to put an end to the war. Nor, with Germany's total military defeat and the conditions subsequent to it, was there any possibility for such a revolt to take place in the period immediately following the war. Hence, the task of rebuilding a Trotskyist movement was formidable. It was further complicated by two other factors. In the first place, when working class organizations did begin to appear again, the workers returned to their loyalty to the "traditional" parties, the Social Democrats and Communists, rather than turning to the Trotskyists for leadership as had been hoped. In the second place, all Trotskyist organization in the Stalinist-dominated East Zone soon became totally impossible, while what the Stalinists were doing in the East largely destroyed the popular appeal in the Western Zones of any Bolshevik movement, Stalinist or Trotskyist.

As the work of reconstructing the German Trotskyist movement within Germany itself began to make some progress, leadership of the movement as a whole was transferred back to the cadres within the country. At least by the early 1950s a new German section of the Fourth International had been created.

The IKD Exiles vs. the Fourth International

The exile leadership of the IKD continued to maintain the line it had first set forth in its "Three Theses" document in October 1941. Soon after the end of the war they issued a new document, "Problems of the European Revolution," in which they reemphasized and brought up to date the arguments they had made in 1941. Referring first to the movements of Resistance during the Nazi occupation of various European countries, the document then noted that "today, the same ideas, enriched by the experience of these national movements, can be applied to Germany. For the machine of oppression . . . is now turned against Germany. . . ."

From this supposed parallel the IKD lead-

ers drew the heretical (from the Trotskyist point of view) conclusion that "the presence of terrible national oppression will sweep the popular masses from their apathy . . . and will bring about an immense national-democratic movement. In place of easy hope of a spontaneous uprising of the German workers, instead of having illusions of an imminent proletarian revolution, the revolutionists will have, as was the case in France, to support unconditionally the movement, to accept the necessary detour of the democratic revolution and conquer the leadership in the course of the struggle, so that the movement, over-running national democratic limits, may as a movement of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, realize the socialist revolution."

The heresy of the IKD leadership brought a quick response from the Fourth International. At its conference in April 1946 the International adopted a resolution which "condemns unanimously the revisionist ideas included in the documents since 1941 by the leadership of the IKD . . . the leadership of the IKD has substituted for our transitional and socialist program corresponding to the historical character of our epoch, which remains fundamentally that of the socialist revolution, a national democratic program based on 'the necessary detour of the democratic revolution' and on the perspective of the 'approaching great national democratic wars of liberation of all the oppressed peoples of Europe.' "

The same resolution ordered the newly elected International Executive Committee and International Secretariat "in close collaboration with the present leadership of the IKD to regroup all the elements who place themselves on the platform of the IVth International and submit to the discipline of its congresses and of its leading organs and organize them in Germany itself in the official section of the IVth International." Finally, the resolution stated that it "invites the leadership and rank and file of the IKD still abroad to apply the decisions of the

conference, to submit to the discipline of the new IEC and the new IS, and to prepare as rapidly as possible their return to Germany, according to the instructions and directives of the International."⁸

The IKD leadership abroad clearly did not pay heed to the orders of the Fourth International. As a consequence, the Second Congress of the International, in 1948, after adopting a long resolution on "The Situation in Germany and the Tasks of the German Internationalist Communists," also voted two organizational resolutions, "On the Reorganization of the German Section," and "On the Foreign Committee of the German Internationalist Communists (AK of the IKD)."

The first of these organizational resolutions noted that in 1935 the Foreign Committee of the IKD (AK) had been recognized as "constituting the official leadership of the German section of the International." However, after the resolution of the April 1946 Conference of the FI, the Foreign Committee had refused to participate in the reorganization of the German section, as provided for in that resolution. Thus, the World Congress decided provisionally to recognize as the German section the group newly reestablished in Germany; and that after that group held its first conference, "The International Executive Committee will definitively recognize the German section."

Meanwhile, the International Secretariat's German Commission was charged with reorganizing the German section. It was directed to establish two political committees, for the West Zone and East Zone respectively, and to call a national conference as soon as possible. It also entrusted the IKD members abroad to send a delegate to the conference and ordered that one emigré comrade be elected to the executive of the new section.

The resolution also provided for establishment of a publication of the IKD abroad, under supervision of the IEC. It was to have an editorial board of three people inside Ger-

many and two outside, and this board "will be confirmed by the coming national conference."

Finally, the resolution on reorganization of the German section recognized that work in Germany had to be conducted illegally. It added that in the Western Zone it was possible to conduct "certain forms of semi-legal activity," such as work in the unions, among the youth and as factions in the workers parties. It stressed that the basic purpose of the IKD must be "to struggle for the leadership of these movements in all parts of social life."⁹

The second organizational resolution, dealing with the Foreign Committee of the IKD, recounted at some length the refusal of that committee to recognize the legitimacy of the IEC and its elected at the 1946 International Conference, their refusal to cooperate in any way with those bodies, to participate in discussions leading up to the Second World Congress, or even to answer correspondence. As a consequence the resolution said that "the world Congress declares that the AK has no right to speak in the name of the IKD. Insofar as being an organism recognized by the International, the AK is declared dissolved." Its members could only remain in the International if they agreed to abide by its discipline.¹⁰

Those resolutions of the Second Congress of the Fourth International marked the end of the long-running dispute between the IKD's leadership abroad and the FI.

The Reestablishment of the IKD in Germany

Most of the prewar leaders of the IKD apparently did not remain in the Trotskyist movement after the war. In 1947 a number of them started a magazine, *Dinge der Zeit*, which continued to appear intermittently for three decades. One of its principal contributors was Fritz Besser (who usually wrote under the name Ernst Most). How-

ever, this periodical was not an avowedly Trotskyist publication.¹¹

The principal prewar German Trotskyist figure who did return to leadership after 1945 was Georg Jungclas. He had fled to Denmark shortly after the Nazi ascension to power and had played a major role in organizing a Trotskyist group in that country. He was arrested by the Nazis in June 1944 and spent the rest of the war in several concentration camps. When the American forces captured the Bayreuth camp where he was, on April 16, 1945, Jungclas was not immediately released "because Czechoslovakian and other Stalinists among the prisoners had taken over the camp."¹²

Immediately after the war Jungclas went to work, first as administrator of the Wagner fortune in Bayreuth, and then as director of the local land office.¹³ However, in 1946 he first made contact with some old Trotskyists in Hamburg, and then got in touch with the headquarters of the Fourth International in Paris. He and the group associated with him began to publish a journal, *Unser Weg (Our Road)*, which continued to come out until September 1959. He was named as the representative of the German Trotskyists to the Second World Congress of the Fourth International in 1948, but had to get there clandestinely since Allied regulations then in force forbade German citizens to travel to France.

After the congress Georg Jungclas became editor of the IKD periodical *Die Internationale*, which was established in conformity with one of the resolutions of the meeting. The publication continued to appear for at least a quarter of a century.¹⁴

The revived Internationalist Communists of Germany (IKD) were a tiny group. Partly as a consequence of that fact, they engaged in the early 1950s in an "entrant" tactic. The party they chose to try to penetrate was the Independent Workers Party (UAP), a Titoist group which arose in the years immediately following the break between Stalin and the Yugoslav Communist leadership. For a

short while the UAP made some progress, reportedly with the help of financial support from Yugoslavia. Then it disappeared.

At that point the German Trotskyists, following the advice then being given by Pablo to work within either the Social Democratic or Communist Party, undertook a policy of "deep entry" into the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). That experiment lasted about fifteen years.¹⁵

During all of this period, Georg Jungclas remained the leading figure in German Trotskyist ranks. On the occasion of his seventieth birthday in 1972 it was noted that "his main activity in the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s was support of the Algerian Revolution, in close contact with the Mohamed-Hardi tendency inside the FLN. He was involved in the publication of the paper *Freies Algerien* [Free Algeria] between 1958 and 1962. Jungclas also participated in the publication of the paper *Sozialistische Politik*, which was directed at members of the SPD, between 1954 and 1956, and after May 1956 in the publication of *Die Internationale* and *Internationale Information*, which existed until 1960."¹⁶

During their long stay within the ranks of the Social Democratic Party the German Trotskyists were not only active in engendering support for the Algerian Revolution, but also in the fight against German rearmament.¹⁷ There is no indication that they achieved any significant influence within the SPD.

The Internationalist Marxist Group

Establishment of the GIM

The German Trotskyists finally emerged from their deep penetration in the Social Democratic Party and reestablished the open Internationalist Communists of Germany (IKD) in 1967. At that point Georg Jungclas retired from active leadership of the group.¹⁸ It has been estimated that there

were about fifty members of the group when it left the Social Democratic ranks.¹⁹

In 1968 the IKD merged with a group which had come out of the Socialist Student Federation (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund—SDS), the student youth movement of the Social Democratic Party. The new organization took the name Internationalist Marxist Group (GIM). It was affiliated with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.²⁰

During the next few years the GIM engaged in a number of different kinds of activities. They participated in 1968 in a congress and rally in West Berlin against the Vietnam War at which Ernest Mandel and Alain Krivine were the leading speakers.²¹ In 1970 the youth group of the GIM, the Revolutionär-Kommunistische Jugend (RKJ), participated in student elections in the University of Mannheim and elsewhere.²² In February 1971, the GIM organized its first public meeting in West Berlin, with Herwarth Acherberg of the GIM, and Mandel and Krivine, as the main speakers.²³

Late in 1971 the German Trotskyists undertook an ambitious program of publishing. They announced in Berlin that under the general title *Permanente Revolution* they would bring out three periodicals dealing with current problems and the theoretical issues.²⁴ We have no indication of how many of these journals actually appeared and for how long.

During 1972 much of GIM's time and energy was taken up with the struggle over the decision of the West Berlin Senate to bar Ernest Mandel from accepting a teaching post which he had been offered by the Free University. He had been a visiting professor the year before for a short while, but the political authorities of West Berlin successfully prevented him from assuming a permanent post. For a while he was even barred from entering the German Federal Republic.²⁵

Also in 1972 the GIM decided not to endorse any party in that year's general elec-

tions. In a long statement, largely critical of the SPD, the GIM said that "on the basis of this analysis, the Central Committee of the GIM . . . and the RKJ . . . decided that their position on the election cannot be reduced to recommending any specific vote—no matter how much this may be regarded as a deficiency." That statement ended, "We must point to the bracing experiences the workers had last April with parliamentarism and its parties and hold up the struggle in the form of mass strikes and demonstrations as a practical alternative to passive trust in the election of the SPD."²⁶

On several occasions in later years the GIM took a more active electoral role. In 1978 they gave "critical support" to the Green Party in regional elections in Hamburg and Hesse.²⁷ In 1980 they urged their supporters to vote for the Social Democratic Party. Among their slogans on that occasion were "No vote for the bosses' parties CDU/CSU or the FDP!" "Vote SPD to prevent Strauss from winning the elections!"²⁸ (Strauss was the very conservative leader of the Bavarian branch of the Christian Democrats, the CSU.)

Factionalism Within the GIM

Almost from the moment of their emergence as a public group once again, the German Trotskyists associated with the United Secretariat suffered severe factional problems. Some of these reflected the struggles going on within the USEC during the 1970s.

At least two splits occurred in USEC's German section in the years immediately following the reestablishment of an open Trotskyist group. In the Spring of 1969 a faction broke away to form the Spartacus group.²⁹ This Spartacusbund continued to exist for a number of years, although itself suffering several splits. It became associated with a dissident USEC group known as the Necessary International Initiative, headed by an Italian Trotskyist, Roberto Massari.³⁰

Subsequently, another schism took place in the GIM, with a group reestablishing the IKD. According to one hostile observer, "The split was in a leftward direction. . . . Several other splits quickly fragmented the IKD leading to the existence in Germany of unstable and competing left-centrist groupings. . . ."³¹

Further dissension arose as the result of the establishment in the winter 1969–70 by the GIM of another group, the Revolutionar-Kommunistische Jugend (RKJ-Revolutionary Communist Youth). At the time of the merger of the GIM and the RKJ several years later, *Was Tun* (*What Is to be Done*), the GIM periodical, explained that "the RKJ was never a 'youth organization' in the classical sense—a group guided by the 'mother organization' and having specific tasks in the field of youth work. The strategic conception of the RKJ was rather that it be a 'lever' with which to build an organization capable of intervening in the class struggle under the special conditions of the youth radicalization. That is, fundamental to the founding of the RKJ was the GIM's extreme weakness after the end of entrisim and the split in the spring of 1969. . . ."³²

The RKJ was formally established as a national organization in a convention held in Frankfurt, May 29–31, 1971. It voted to become a "sympathizing organization" of USEC. Its function was spelled out thus: "In a period of West German capitalism in which a larger part of the worker youth, college students, and high-school students are approaching revolutionary positions, the RKJ will intervene among the radicalizing youth to hasten the organization of the vanguard for consistent anticapitalist struggle. In doing this, the RKJ will make an essential contribution to the anchoring of the revolutionary organization in the class struggles of the West German proletariat."³³

However, the creation of the RKJ apparently created confusion among USEC German Trotskyists rather than strengthening their movement. As a consequence, only

five months after this founding conference a second national convention of the RKJ was held October 30–November 1971 in Cologne. Although that meeting allegedly “reflected the rapid growth of the West German Trotskyist movement,” its most notable decision was to call for the merger of the RKJ and the GIM.³⁴

This merger was finally achieved at a “fusion conference” held December 30, 1972–January 1, 1973. Although it was reported that “broad agreement was reached on some key points” at that convention, it was decided to have formal votes on three competing draft political resolutions presented at the meeting “because neither the proposed theses nor the state of the discussion within the organization yet fully meets the objective requirements of the struggles in West Germany.”³⁵

A resolution dealing with the reasons for unification of the GIM and RKJ was passed. *Was Tun* subsequently reported that “we believe that the conception of the RKJ, despite its great practical value in building the section was based on a number of mistakes, which are described in this resolution; an underestimation of the newly arising revolutionary left itself, which generally strove to overcome an outlook restricted to its own sector and to work out a general perspective for the whole society; an underestimation of the practical effects of the upsurge of West German workers struggles, which opened up increasing possibilities for bridging the gap between the working class movement and the movement of radical youth by direct intervention in the proletariat; an underestimation of the concrete significance of the weight of the Fourth International in West Germany, which in the long run, if this development of a ‘special West German strategy for building the organization’ had been carried further, would have led to a political regression.”³⁶

The sharp differences of opinion reflected in the “fusion conference” continued within the GIM. This was reflected in the

1975 national conference of the organization, when three factions appeared: “These tendencies are the Internationalist Tendency (IT), which has held the majority on the Central Committee since the 1974 conference and supports the majority leadership of the Fourth International; the Compass Tendency (KT), the second largest tendency; and a third, small tendency, the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT), which supports the minority tendency in the Fourth International.”³⁷

The German USEC affiliate was thus split along the lines of the controversy then raging generally within the United Secretariat. The largest group was aligned with the “Europeans” (Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank and Livio Maitan) who were then pushing a “guerrilla” approach, particularly for the Latin American countries. The smallest group within the GIM was aligned with the USEC faction led by the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. The second largest GIM faction (Compass Tendency) was aligned with the so-called Third Tendency within USEC, led by the Italian Roberto Massari.³⁸

Was Tun, in reporting on this meeting of GIM, noted that “in the vote on the political resolution at the 1975 National Conference, none of the three tendencies in the GIM was able to win a majority. For a democratic-centralist organization, this is a situation as difficult as it is unusual. It means that no tendency has a mandate to lead the organization on behalf of a majority of the membership.” In the face of this situation, it was decided to summon shortly a new national conference. Meanwhile, the 1975 meeting agreed to give the Internationalist Tendency an absolute majority on the new Central Committee and provided that its version of the political resolution be “the public general line of the GIM.” A sixteen-point program, for work in the labor movement, among immigrants, and on other organizational issues was adopted as an interim directive to the leadership. Of the thirty members of the new Central Committee, the IT

was given sixteen, the KT twelve and the LTT two; with the IT getting seven alternate members, the KT six and the LTT two.³⁹

Factionalism continued. On July 9, 1978, the Central Committee of the GIM adopted a resolution which indicated that the internecine struggles were threatening the very existence of the organization. This resolution started out by proclaiming that "despite at times violent political conflicts, the GIM has not yet fallen apart. While this fragile unity may rest on the realization that left to their own resources splinter groupings cannot arrive at any political perspective for the long run, nonetheless the fundamental common basis that still exists must be underlined." It claimed that "the extant differences of opinion are of a tactical and not of a principled nature."⁴⁰

The resolution went on to note that "a widespread criticism of the national leadership appeared at the June National Conference. In all probability the critics will be able to find support only from a minority in the future as well. But on the other hand, no other grouping, coalition or political conception has appeared from which an alternative leadership could emerge. Hence it is as good as certain that the present up-in-the-air situation will continue, and the collapse of the organization will be hastened."

The Central Committee therefore resolved that "extraordinary efforts to unify the organization" had to be taken. These were the establishment of a Working Group, with representatives of all factions, even those not represented in the Central Committee, and the request that the United Secretariat name someone to preside over that organization. The Central Committee prescribed that "The task of the Group will be to produce a detailed program for the GIM's work in the coming year, which as far as possible will not be open to 'interpretation,' " and it appealed "to parts of the GIM to take part in this attempt at unifying our practice, to work out suggestions for it, name representative delegates to the Work-

ing Group, and to work with it in a spirit of compromise."⁴¹

Subsequent Activities of GIM

In spite of fears that continuing factionalism might totally destroy the organization, the GIM continued to exist. It continued to be active in various fields and on various issues. Early in 1979 *Was Tun* expressed strong opposition to the Chinese invasion of Vietnam.⁴² They strongly supported Solidarity in Poland and opposed its suppression by the Jaruzelski government.⁴³

In October 1983 *Was Tun* published a special supplement on the wars then under way in Central America, Lebanon, Afghanistan and between Iran and Iraq. This proclaimed that "It is correct and necessary for the struggle of the peace movement to concentrate on halting the stationing of the Cruise and Pershing 2 missiles. On the basis of the broad alliance of this movement, it is just as correct not to impose positions on these international conflicts in an ultimatic fashion. But a revolutionary socialist policy within the peace movement must seek to convince as many as possible of an internationalist standpoint and to initiate corresponding actions."⁴⁴

At the height of the controversy over the introduction of new missiles into Europe in June 1983, *Was Tun* published an article which set forth clearly the German USec Trotskyist position on the issue. It first argued that "the warmongers in the Pentagon are pursuing the goal of making the Soviet Union subject to military blackmail, to force it to renounce all support for liberation movements in the world, be they in Central America or in the Middle East. Moreover, they have never renounced their goal of destroying the non-capitalist property relations in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe and to once again open these countries to capital. It is the right of the Soviet Union to defend itself against this; it is the duty of the peace movement to defend this

right. For this reason, we reject the equation of East and West."

The statement went on to say that "this does not change our opposition to the bureaucratic repression in the Soviet Union, in Poland, and elsewhere. The repressive regime of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and other noncapitalist countries must be overthrown in order to reopen the way to a democratic and self-governed socialism."

The statement continued: "The answer of the Soviet bureaucracy to the imperialist arms buildup must nevertheless be perceived by the peace movement and the workers movement in Eastern Europe and in the West as a threat. It is neither suited to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism, nor [to] prevent a nuclear war. While a political answer is necessary, the Soviet answer remains military."

The German Trotskyists went on to insist that "the Soviet bureaucracy is pushing a deceitful and criminal game, if it is seeking to create the impression that it could win a nuclear war. It has no chance to economically, militarily, or technologically overtake imperialism. . . . The Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact are behind the imperialist West economically as well as technologically—and therefore also militarily. . . ."

The GIM statement went on to say that "only through the independent mobilization of the working class in the West as well as in the East can the warmongering policies of NATO be stopped. Therefore, the working class in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe must have the opportunity to organize itself in self-governing democratic structures for peace. . . . We therefore support the initiation of a peace movement in the Soviet Union and in the East European countries that is independent of the state. . . . We protest against all attempts by the Soviet bureaucracy to go over the heads of the masses in wanting to station nuclear weapons in Eastern Europe. . . ."

The statement ended with four slogans: "No new nuclear weapons in the West or

East! Solidarity with the independent peace movement in East Germany and the Soviet Union! For a nuclear weapon-free Europe from Portugal to Poland! For a democratic, self-governing, and socialist Europe!"⁴⁵

The GIM members carried on some minimal activity in the trade union movement, particularly in the two largest unions, those of metal workers and government employees, and had a handful of elected union officials among their members. The GIM also ran a publishing house which translated and published a number of books which had first been put out by their comrades in the United States and in France, as well as publishing some original German material. Late in 1982 it was estimated that the GIM had about 400 members.⁴⁶

Other German Trotskyist Groups

The United Secretariat is not the only faction in International Trotskyism which has had affiliates in Germany. The Lambertist, Morenoist, International Socialists, and Spartacist factions of Fourth Internationalism have all had groups in the Federal Republic associated with them.

The first Trotskyist group in Germany opposed to the United Secretariat appeared in "the mid sixties," and established association with the International Committee of the Fourth International. At that time "a small group of German youth began to question and then to challenge the premises of Pabloism. . . . it was no accident that the first theoretical study to which the new comrades devoted themselves in the process of becoming supporters of the International Committee of the Fourth International was . . . the June 17 uprising. The result was a brochure of twenty-four pages appearing in mimeographed form in the initial number of the IAK."⁴⁷

This affiliate of the Lambert-Healy International Committee consisted of two parts. One was a group of adults "grouped around the newspaper *International Workers Cor-*

respondence [IAK]." The second was a youth group, Young Guard.⁴⁸ By 1971 this group was known as the Sozialistischer Arbeiter Bund, and it sided with the Healyites in the 1971-72 split in the International Committee.⁴⁹

The Lambertist Reorganization Committee of the Fourth International (CORQI) also had for some years an affiliate in West Germany. During the 1980 general election it was reported that "in liaison with other German groups affiliated with the Parity Committee, the German section of CORQI carried on a struggle for the defeat of Strauss, for the victory of the SPD, in the process of fighting for an all-SPD government."⁵⁰ This German affiliate participated in a conference in Paris at the end of July 1980 looking towards a formal merger of the CORQI and the Morenoist faction of the United Secretariat.⁵¹ According to a United Secretariat source the Lambertist group in Germany consistently was smaller than that of the USEC group.⁵²

The Lambertist group, the ISA, continued to exist in the mid-1980s. At the time of the state elections in Baden-Württemberg early in 1984 the ISA urged its followers to vote for the candidates of the Social Democratic Party, but added that it "declares at the same time that the call and electoral profession of faith are not sufficient; it is necessary for an axis of combat to be established and discussed to aid the working masses and youth to combat the policy of the leadership of the SPD, which threatens to bring about a defeat."⁵³

After the breakaway of the faction of the United Secretariat under the leadership of Nahuel Noreno late in 1979 to form the International Workers League (Fourth International), that faction of the international Trotskyist movement also had a West German affiliate. It was known as the Socialist League, and had as its newspaper *Aktion*.⁵⁴

By the middle 1980s the International Socialist Tendency also had an affiliate in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Social-

istische Arbeiter Gruppe. It was represented at a meeting of the tendency in Great Britain in 1984.⁵⁵ No further information is available on this organization.

The international Spartacist tendency (sic) had also had its affiliate in West Germany, the Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD). A leader of the TLD, Frank Behr, wrote in 1982 that "it's hard to say precisely where the first brick was laid for the TLD. For instance, in a time of international isolation for the SL/US, several issues of *Klassenkampf* ('Spartakist') were published in 1967-68 by a supporter of the SL/US in Germany, in an attempt to intersect leftward-moving elements in the German New Left. . . . The TLD in its present form grew through regroupment and recruitment in the ostensibly Trotskyist milieu during the early 1970s, particularly from *Spartacus KJO* and *Spartacus BL* (later Spartacusbund), nationally limited leftwing splits from the ostensibly Trotskyist international bloc of Ernest Mandel. . . . This was augmented in the late seventies by accretions from the increasingly social-democratic GIM. . . ." Behr wrote that "the size and influence of the TLD are as yet modest—we are neither the largest nor the smallest of the groups which lay claim to Trotsky in Germany (which vary in size from a handful to 150)."

Behr noted the positions assumed by the TLD: "our defense of the full revolutionary program of Leninism and Trotskyism; our sharp opposition to all popular frontism as a bourgeois trap for the working class; unconditional military defense of the deformed and degenerated workers states against imperialism combined with the struggle for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies. . . ."

On more specific issues, Behr noted that the TLD had used the slogan "Down with the Shah, down with the Mullahs:" in dealing with the Iranian situation. He noted also "our support to the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan, which can open the way for social progress in this backward feudalist

preserve." He also emphasized "our slogan for the 'Revolutionary Reunification of Germany' through social revolution in the West and political revolution in the East," adding that "the latter is key to the task of breaking through the reawakening bourgeois/social democratic nationalism in Germany (frequently in 'pacifist' garb) with a revolutionary perspective for Germany and Europe." Finally, he noted the TLD slogan "Stop the Counter-revolution of Solidamosc," and the TLD's general opposition to Polish Solidarity.

Behr concluded his letter by saying that "if this sounds perhaps familiar from the other ISR publications, it is only because we are, indeed an international organization for socialist revolution."⁵⁶

In 1982, the Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands suffered a small split, with the expulsion of the External Tendency (ET). The programmatic or principled issues in this division remained obscure. At about the same time similar schisms took place in the Spartacist organizations in the United States and Canada.⁵⁷ The German ET took the name Gruppe IV Internationale.⁵⁸

Conclusion

German Trotskyism revived, at least in the Federal Republic, after World War II. Its membership remained tiny and its influence marginal even on the far left of West German politics. After two experiments with "deep entry," first into a Titoite offshoot of the Stalinists and then in the Social Democratic Party, the Trotskyists finally emerged as a separate open movement in the late 1960s. At that point the Trotskyists were by their own admission very weak, perhaps having lost a good deal more than they had gained from entrism.

Even before emerging from the SPD the German Trotskyists had begun to splinter. In the next two decades they split into more than half a dozen different groups, several of which were themselves characterized by

bitter factionalism. Unlike their counterparts in several other European countries, the German Trotskyists had very little impact on the youth revolt of the 1960s and early 1970s and developed virtually no base at all in the trade union movement.

Trotskyism in Great Britain: The Early Years of British Trotskyism

Nowhere else has the Trotskyist movement been more consistently plagued by the problem of "entrism" than in Great Britain. From its inception, British Trotskyism has had to face the fact that the vast majority of the country's working class has continued to regard the British Labor Party as "their" party. Consequently, the British Trotskyists have been confronted with the quandary of working inside the usually quite amorphous Labor Party, where they could be "near" the workers but faced the constant dangers involved in having to a greater or less degree to "water down" their real position, or staying outside the Labor Party, where they could more easily maintain their doctrinal purity but in so doing almost certainly assured themselves of a more or less high degree of isolation from the British working class. On more than one occasion they have sought to combine the two tactics.

The situation has been complicated by the peculiar organizational structure of the British Labor Party. It was originally established at the turn of the twentieth century as a coalition of the country's trade unions, the cooperative movement, and various "socialist societies," the most important of which was the Independent Labor Party. Ever since, most of the nation's important trade unions have continued to be directly affiliated—and pay dues—to the Labor Party. Similarly, the "socialist societies" tradition has persisted, although the Independent Labor Party disaffiliated in 1932 it was soon succeeded by the Socialist League as an officially recognized affiliate of the party. In addition, the "socialist societies" tradition has consistently found expression

in the existence of clearly delineated groups of Labor Party members with their own organizations, discipline, and publications working within the Labor Party, without being official affiliates. In recent decades the group around *The Tribune*, founded by Aneurin Bevan, has been one of the most significant and long-lived such groups.

A third element in the Labor Party picture was added right after World War I. This was the "constituency Labour parties," that is, Labor Party clubs organized in the various parliamentary constituencies to nominate and try to elect Labor Party candidates. These clubs have since 1918 had their own representation—in proportion to their membership—at the annual conferences of the Labor Party, along with the trade unions and the remaining "socialist societies."

This peculiar form of organization of the Labor Party presented special problems for the Trotskyists. To the degree that they were successful in developing any influence within the trade union movement, the Trotskyists were virtually by definition active in the British Labor Party as well, since the unions in which they worked were affiliated with the party. Hence, the question of "entrism" resolved itself in essence into a decision as to whether or not to participate in the constituency Labor parties and the party's youth organization.

Two other factors were of importance in this situation. One was the fact that since the inception of the British Labor Party it has virtually always had a more or less clearly defined left wing. It centered on the British Socialist Party before and during World War I, the Independent Labor Party, and the Socialist League between the wars, and the Tribune and Tony Benn groups in the decades since World War II. The last factor was that during most of their existence the Trotskyists have had to face the presence of another Marxist-Leninist group, the Communist Party of Great Britain, which was also usually practicing "entrism" in the Labor Party and usually could

be counted upon to be hostile to the Trotskyists within whatever left wing existed in the Labor Party at any given time.

Origins of British Trotskyism

As the wave of propaganda against Trotsky within the CPSU and the Comintern rose in the latter part of 1924, there were few voices raised within the British Communist Party in protest against this onslaught by the Soviet First Troika. One such voice, however, was that of Arthur Reade, a member of the London District Committee of the CPGB, and business manager of its semi-official periodical *Labour Monthly*. At a London membership meeting on January 17, 1925, at which a resolution endorsing the CPGB's denunciation of Trotsky's *Lessons of October* was introduced, Reade submitted an amendment from the London District Committee which supported the Opposition and regretted the haste with which the CPGB's Council had acted. His motion was overwhelmingly defeated. Reade, meanwhile, had been giving a series of lectures expounding on Trotsky's positions to the Battersea Young Communist League.¹ These lectures were to greatly influence at least one of the people who was to become a leader of British Trotskyism.

Shortly after the January 17 meeting, Reade was suspended as a member of the London District Committee of the CPGB. Soon afterward, he quit the party and left the country. As Martin Upham has commented, "perhaps the first British Trotskyist had departed, apparently making little impression."²

The first organized group in Great Britain to take a position in defense of Leon Trotsky and to seek to interpret his ideas was the Marxian League, which was formed sometime in 1929 or 1930. According to Al Richardson it "carried out propagandist activity in Hyde Park, held socials and theoretical discussions in Totenham Court Road area."

He noted that it was "of importance because it contained figures later to play a role both in the British Trotskyist movement and internationally—D. P. R. ('Phillip') Gunawardena, Colvin R. de Silva, Hugo Dewar, Dr. Worrall, Max Nicholls, Bill Graham, Gerry and Lee Bradley." From February 1932 on they published a mimeographed paper, *The New Man*.³

The American Trotskyist, Albert Glotzer, entered into contact with the Marxian League when he first visited Great Britain in 1931. The members of the League argued to him that there was no use working in the trade union movement, which was hopelessly corrupted, and that there was no hope in the British Labor Party. Glotzer thought their position coincided with that which Lenin had denounced in his pamphlet *Left Wing Communism. An Infantile Disease*, and he had long discussions and arguments with them. As a consequence they wrote a letter to Trotsky, denouncing Glotzer.⁴

Shortly afterward Glotzer attended a meeting of the International Secretariat in Paris which dealt with the question of the Marxian League. Present were M. Mill (Pavel Okun), Pierre Naville, Pierre Frank, Myrtos of the Greek section, and Leonetti.⁵ Also attending was Chandu Ram (Aggrawala) of the Marxian League, there to argue its case to be recognized as the British section.⁶

Glotzer largely spoke for the others present, when in answering Chandu Ram, he said (according to the minutes of the 15 meeting of October 13, 1931) that "in England we must utilize all elements in the process of building the Opposition. We can have a good organization depending on how well it is organized. Our object is to bring these various elements together. In conference, we should discuss the problems of the British movement, the questions that fundamentally concern the Opposition. In this manner, through mutual discussion will these questions be solved. In these preliminary gatherings of the various groups, the Opposi-

tion organization will emerge. Not everyone claiming to support us will be with us in the end, but we will at least have an Opposition organization which is in fundamental agreement with the views of the Opposition."⁷

When Glotzer got to Turkey and talked with Trotsky, and when Trotsky read the documents of the Marxian League which Glotzer had brought with him, Trotsky issued a statement defending Glotzer against the Marxian League.⁸ Subsequently, Trotsky had published in *The Militant* of New York City his reply to a letter from Francis Ridley and Chandu Ram, two of the principal leaders of the Marxian League. In this reply he commented that "it would be very sad if the critical members of the British Communist Party would imagine that the opinions of Ridley and Ram represent the opinions of the Left Opposition."⁹

Little more was heard of the Marxian League. However, one of its important figures, Hugo Dewar, who had strongly disagreed with the Ridley-Ram position, soon joined forces with those who were to bring into existence the Trotskyist movement in Great Britain. These were the so-called Balham Group, about a dozen members of the Communist Party in Southwest London centering on the Balham area.

The Balham Group, whose principal figures were Reg Groves, Stewart Purkis, E. S. (Billy) Williams, Bert Field, Henry Sara, and Harry Wicks, had for some time been unhappy with the general course of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Groves, who was for some time an assistant district organizer (number two man in the London organization) had been a delegate to the November 1929 eleventh congress of the CPGB, at which the old leadership of the party was largely removed. He supported the ouster of leaders who he thought had been too compromising during the 1926 General Strike and thereafter but was perturbed by the fact that the new leadership was chosen on the basis of being "recommended" to the congress instead of being freely elected by the

delegates as had been the case in the past.¹⁰ At that point Groves and his friends did not see the international implications of the purge and that it was in fact the imposition by the Stalinists of a leadership which would do as it was told by the Comintern officialdom.¹¹

Groves, whose rise within the CPGB was reportedly sponsored for some time by R. Palme Dutt, had other grounds for disagreement with the top party leadership: "He was angry about how they altered his pamphlet for the 1929 elections, how the 'Daily Worker' treated his 'Workers Notebook' articles especially on India, and how they began to alter their line of trade union struggle without discussing it."¹²

Martin Upham has commented about another Balham Group leader, Henry Sara, that he was "moderately well known in the party . . . and, uniquely among the future founder members of the British Section, he had participated in the theoretical discussions in the party press." He had been a Communist candidate for the House of Commons in 1929.¹³

The Balham Group had had some awareness of the nature of the struggles going on within the Soviet Party and the Comintern. Because they lacked adequate information on the issues they had either voted against or abstained on the routine resolutions in their local party organizations to approve the expulsion of the Soviet Left in 1927,¹⁴ and supported the London District Committee's refusal to endorse the expulsion of the Soviet Right in 1929.¹⁵

Late in 1930 Harry Wicks became a member of the Balham Group. He had just come home from spending three years at the Lenin School in Moscow and was, as a result, relatively well informed about the factional fights which had taken place in the Soviet Party and the Comintern.¹⁶ Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson have also noted that "Wicks . . . had been more or less a Trotskyist since hearing A. E. Reade speak at the Battersea YCL in 1925."¹⁷

Bornstein and Richardson also have cited the importance of another member of the Balham Group in informing its members of what was transpiring in the CPSU. This was a man who went under the name "George Weston," and who "was a G.P.U. man attached to 'Red Aid,' and probably knew more about the conflict than we do now." They added that "in fact, it was Weston who actually smuggled out the criticism of the Draft Programme of the Comintern that James P. Cannon subsequently published and picked up the credit for."¹⁸

It was not until the spring of 1931 that the Balham Group established its first contacts with the International Communist Left Opposition. This came about largely by accident. In a radical bookstore in the center of London Reg Groves came across and bought several copies of *The Militant* of New York City, which contained, among other things, several articles by Trotsky. They soon entered into correspondence with the American Trotskyists, particularly Arne Swabeck, at that time secretary of the Communist League of America.

Reg Groves noted that "we made it clear to the Americans that we were not prepared to set up a Left Opposition group in Britain." He added that "we went along with them on much, such as the restoration of full inner-party democracy in the national sections, a diminution of Russian command of the Comintern, and a recovery of the communism of the founding fathers. And we were deeply shaken by Trotsky's powerful indictment of Comintern policy in Germany . . . to Trotsky's warnings of the disaster that would follow for workers in Germany, Russia and throughout the world if that policy was persisted in; and by his call for a principled united front of the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party to check and defeat the Nazis. All these things we would raise in the party and fight for, but as members, not outsiders."¹⁹

Both Trotsky and the Americans sought to bring pressure upon the Balham Group to

set up a Left Opposition organization. In answer to a letter from Reg Groves Trotsky wrote him that "the British Left Opposition must begin systematic work. You must establish a central staff, even if a small one. You must establish your own publication, even if on a modest scale. It is necessary to carry on sustained activity, analysis, criticism and propaganda. . . ."²⁰

Albert Glotzer visited the members of the Balham Group on his way back from his sojourn with Trotsky. At about the same time, Max Shachtman, "urbane, witty, a theoretician of agility and much experience," also passed through London and conferred with them. Both of the Americans sought to convince them to organize as a Left Opposition. However, as Reg Groves noted, "We remained unconvinced as to the wisdom of the course suggested. . . . We were not yet the British Section of the International Left Opposition; and it was to be several months before we became so."²¹

During the spring and summer of 1932 the Balham Group came into increasing conflict with the leadership of the CPGB. In letters to the *Daily Worker* and the party leaders they criticized party positions on the role of the trade unions, on the need for a united front in Germany to confront the Nazis and on several other matters. At the same time they established good working relations with the Independent Labor Party branch in their part of the city. In May they published a mimeographed journal, *The Communist*, which carried Trotsky's most recent statement on Germany and announced that "the British Section of the Left Opposition was now established," but without identifying the editors of the journal or the members of the new "British Section."²²

The final straw, insofar as the CPGB authorities were concerned, was the Balham Group's opposition to the nature of the projected World Congress Against War to be held in Amsterdam, organized by the Comintern but "sponsored" by what the Balham Group categorized as "a number of pacifists

and social patriots.²³ The Balham Group organized the South West London Anti-War Committee, held a number of public meetings with participation of some trade unionists, Labor Party and ILP people, and Communists. This committee elected "Comrade Wild" of the Amalgamated Engineering Union as its delegate to the Amsterdam Congress, with instructions to support a number of points, including "untiring explanation that the only guarantee of victory for the workers of Russia lies in the development of world revolution."

The South West London Anti-War Committee resolution was published in the *Daily Worker*, but was soon denounced by CPGB leader J. R. Campbell, who said that it needed "redrafting on the basis of a genuine fight against the plans of the warmongers and cutting out the phrases which conceal Trotskyist leanings."²⁴

On the same day this denunciation appeared, Reg Groves, Henry Sara, and Harry Wicks were summoned to CPGB district headquarters. There they were presented with a copy of *The Communist* and were asked by William Gallacher "will you now help to unite the party by supporting party policy and accepting party discipline?" When they refused a direct answer, Wicks and Groves were expelled. Henry Sara was for the moment merely "suspended."²⁵

Disciplinary action against these three was soon followed by action against other members of the Balham Group, which the CPGB officially declared to be "liquidated." At the next party congress in November 1932, the group members handed out to the delegates a document entitled "To Our Comrades in the Communist Party From the 'Liquidated' Balham Group," which of course, was not officially considered by the meeting. It listed twelve people who, in effect, had become the founders of British Trotskyism: Steve Dowdall, Harry Wicks, Henry Sara, Jim Barratt, D. Groves, Reg Groves, W. Pyne, F. Chalcraft, I. Mussi, C. Whiting, M. Simmonds, and N. Dowdall.²⁶

A few other people who sympathized with the Balham Group, including Max Nicholls, W. Graham, Gerry and Lee Bradley, and Arthur Cooper, were able to continue within the CPGB for some time further before being expelled in their turn.²⁷

Relations between the British Trotskyists and the International Left Opposition were still a bit tenuous. However, Harry Wicks was one of those present at the informal meeting of Trotsky with his international followers in Copenhagen in November 1932, and Reg Groves attended the preconference of the International Left Opposition in Paris in February 1933.²⁸

Entrism

The Entrist Problem

Within a few months the British Group of the Left Opposition of the Communist International, as the British Trotskyists first called themselves, had about forty members.²⁹ In May 1933 they began to publish a paper, *Red Flag*, which Martin Upham described as "a propaganda vehicle aimed at a revolutionary audience."³⁰ Leon Trotsky sent the new periodical a message of greeting, calling its appearance "a modest step forward," and adding that "we must hope that other steps will follow." He stressed to his British followers the need for studying the policies of the CPGB, to know its errors of omission and commission, and had words of praise for the mimeographed bulletin *The Communist* which the group was also publishing. He urged that it be used "for the examination of the policy of the British Communist Party . . . and also a discussion of controversial questions within the Left Opposition itself."³¹

The first formal meeting of the British Opposition took place on June 18, 1933. It adopted a constitution and accepted a national committee resolution "specifying the group's main tasks as: clarifying ideas and holding regular conferences; a continuous

intensive campaign on the CPGB; paying attention to the left wing youth and especially the YCL, selling a minimum 1000 *Red Flags*; publishing *The Communist* when necessary, participating more fully in the ILO."³²

When, after the crushing of the Socialist and Communist movements of Germany Leon Trotsky proclaimed the need for setting up new Communist parties and a new International, the British Trotskyists endorsed the idea. They thereupon changed their name to Communist League.³³

The British Trotskyists remained extremely isolated politically. With most of them no longer in the Communist Party they did not have the advantage of whatever contacts it had within the trade union movement, or of the financial backing which the Comintern provided the CPGB. But neither did their now being outside of the Communist Party's ranks automatically give them contacts with the great mass of the workers who were supporters of the Labor Party.

The Trotskyists were, therefore, faced with the problem of "entrism": In order to grow and to exert influence, they had to find a place in a larger political body. At that particular moment the policy of entrism, if they were to adopt it, presented two possible choices.

Most unions, it is true, belonged to the Labor Party. However, there also existed the Independent Labor Party, which until early in 1932 had itself belonged to the Labor Party but had disaffiliated in the wake of the collapse of the Second Labor Government in August 1931, and the disastrous defeat of the Labor Party in the subsequent general election. The ILP was to the left of the Labor Party, had a history and tradition even longer than that of the Labor Party, and was more or less adrift ideologically. At least some of the ILP leaders had some personal and political sympathy for Trotsky, as was shown when the Independent Labor Party published as a pamphlet (with an introduction by James Maxton) Trotsky's public speech during his short visit to Copenhagen in December 1932.³⁴

Thus, although it had the disadvantage of being infinitely smaller than the Labor Party, the ILP seemed likely to be more easily influenced by Trotskyist ideas and organizational activity than was the Labor Party. However, as Martin Upham has noted, "The ILP had a very weak union base."³⁵

Trotsky advised his British followers to undertake entrism in the ILP. But this move proved easier for Trotsky to prescribe than for his followers to execute. The problem led to a split in the ranks of the Communist League in December 1933. A majority of its members, who "could not resolve the problem of applying Trotsky's proposal," decided for the time being at least not to try to go into the Independent Labor Party but rather to maintain a separate organization outside. Only a minority of about a dozen members of the Communist League finally did undertake entrism in the ILP.

With this split, new complications developed for the British Trotskyists. The International Secretariat of the Left Opposition, not wishing to encumber the "entrists" with the possible charge that they were "agents of an outside body," decided that both the majority and minority groups from the Communist League should henceforth be considered "sympathizers" rather than full-fledged affiliates of the International Left Opposition.³⁶ As Martin Upham has noted, "Withdrawal of recognition of the CL by the IS was a complex affair, not accepted by the majority."³⁷

The Entrists in the Independent Labor Party

The Trotskyist group that decided to enter the ILP explained its reasons for doing so at the time of entry. It proclaimed that "the building of a new party would be painfully slow. The possibility of a speedier way of establishing an effective revolutionary party is provided by the ILP, which despite its past mistakes, represents a potentially revolutionary force."³⁸

Even before the minority of the Commu-

nist League decided to work within the ILP rather than independently, there existed a secret Bolshevik-Leninist Fraction of some thirty ILP members, principally in London. They succeeded in getting ten branches to support "the Trotskyist line" in the January 1934 conference of the London ILP.³⁹

However, Bornstein and Richardson have noted that the Communist League faction which entered the ILP "made little progress during the first year. It was Autumn 1934, before they set up a functioning group (after having been in the ILP for 10 months). Their first delegate to an ILP congress, Ernie Patterson, had been converted to Trotskyism before the group went inside, and he antagonized the still largely pacifist ILP at the conference by talk of Soviets and the necessity for armed insurrection."⁴⁰

The Marxist Group was finally established at a meeting on November 3, 1934, attended by delegates from four London ILP branches controlled by the Trotskyists. Martin Upham has noted that "Sixty ILPers attended and vowed to transform the ILP into a revolutionary party."⁴¹

Al Richardson has noted that the Communist Leaguers entering the ILP included Denzil Harber, Margaret Johns, Bill Graham, and Max Nicholls, among others. He added that "they were later joined inside the ILP by Bert Matlow, Arthur Cooper, C. L. R. James, Tony Doncaster, John Archer, John Goffe, Ernie Patterson, Hilda Lane . . . Ted Grant . . . and others."⁴²

Upon entering the ILP, the Trotskyists were faced not only with the traditional leadership of the party, who were also leaders of the so-called London Bureau on an international level, but with a rival group of "entrists," those of the Communist Party. The latter were generally grouped in the Revolutionary Policy Committee, which also had some non-Stalinists associated with it.⁴³

Martin Upham has noted that "it is impossible to make sense of Trotskyist behavior within the ILP without allowing for the effects of communist policy. The ILP as a

whole was drawn towards the CPGB because it apparently embodied the Russian Revolution and Marxist authority. Close cooperation in a united front was another matter and revolts . . . were traceable to association with the communists. The Trotskyists noted this, and some of them were to strive to appear as a loyal opposition within the ILP. And some ILP leaders, notably Brockway, found Trotsky's thought a useful proof that King Street did not possess a monopoly of revolutionary wisdom."⁴⁴ [King Street was where the CPGB headquarters was located.]

The Marxist Group in the ILP put out a number of publications. *Marxist Bulletin* was a "duplicated pamphlet series, mostly of the works of Trotsky and statements of the International Left Opposition." Some ILP branches which were controlled by the Marxist Group also edited similar material. The members of the Marxist Group also contributed to the internal bulletin and theoretical periodical of the ILP, *Controversy*.⁴⁵

Trotskyist influence in the ILP appears to have reached its apogee at the party's 1935 annual conference. There "it had managed to deploy its limited strength to best advantage . . . by means of frequent speeches from its few delegates and a phalanx of identifiable Trotskyist resolutions on each subject. None of its positions was passed by conference, but it had attained status almost as a balancing force to the RPC."⁴⁶ James Jupp has noted that at this 1935 ILP Conference "six London branches and the East Liverpool branch were clearly distinguishable as consistent adherents to the Trotskyist viewpoint."⁴⁷

The advent of the 1935 general election presented the Trotskyists in the ILP with a serious problem. In the two years preceding this election the Labor Party had made a considerable comeback, doing very well in parliamentary by elections and capturing control of the London County Council. The ILP, on the other hand, was exceedingly weak and would be able to run candidates only in a very limited number of constituen-

cies. The Marxist Group in the ILP, therefore, had to decide what it should urge its supporters to do in those areas in which the ILP was not fielding nominees.

John Archer was dispatched by the Group to make a tour of ILP branches to try to ascertain the real strength of the party. He concluded that only in the Glasgow area, where ILP leader James Maxton and others had a long tradition and where the Labor Party was very much an Irish machine organization and quite corrupt, did the Independent Labor Party have anything approaching a mass following. In other parts of the country it generally had very little influence.⁴⁸

In spite of Archer's observations "the Group decided to try to effect an alliance with the Centrist leaders of the ILP. Hitherto it had called upon the ILP to support all Labor candidates except in certain places in the Glasgow area. . . . In the hope of avoiding social-patriotism, the Marxist Group now decided to call for support for all ILP candidates and for only a very few pacifist Labor candidates." John Archer has admitted that "conditional support for Labor candidates (such as is embodied in the formula 'Labor to Power on a Socialist Programme'), implying support for some but not for others, or for none, was a mistake, which was to have serious consequences, even though the Group was not large and could not influence the election results." He added that "the Marxist Group isolated itself from the general movement to get rid of the reactionary government, leaving a space in the Labor Party which the Stalinists eagerly filled."⁴⁹

During its sojourn in the ILP, one of the Marxist Group's major assets was undoubtedly C. L. R. James. A native of the West Indies, James was, as Martin Upham has said, "the most prominent black in the party, indeed in British politics." At the time of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 he was for a time the ILP's principal spokesman for its position of supporting "workers sanctions" instead of League of Nations action against Italy.⁵⁰

In November 1935 two Canadian members of the British Trotskyist group visited Trotsky in Norway to discuss, among other things, the role of his followers in the ILP. They "reported that Trotsky believed the Marxist Group to have been correct to act with prudence, but that the situation had been changed by the cooling of relations between the ILP and the Stalinists and the sharp differences which the approach of war was causing between pacifists and revolutionaries."⁵¹

It was proposed that the Marxist Group launch a manifesto, for which they would seek signatures, so as to test their influence within the ILP. This manifesto would call on the ILP to "create fractions in the Labor Party, Trade Unions and Co-operative organizations; send its small youth section into the Labor League of Youth; repudiate pacifism by means of a special conference . . . acknowledge the bankruptcy of the 'London Bureau' and declare the Fourth International."⁵² Depending on the results of this manifesto, the Trotskyists would decide whether to stay in the ILP or join the Labor Party.

Trotsky's point of view did not by any means meet with unanimous support among those of his followers who were in the ILP. Many did not want to leave the Independent Labor Party, some feeling that they still might be able to capture control of it, others arguing that "on principle" they could not join the Labor Party. Still others, expecting to be thrown out of the ILP by the party's leadership, favored setting up an "open" Trotskyist organization outside both the Labor Party and the ILP. No decision was reached.⁵³

At Easter 1936 the Trotskyists suffered a defeat at the annual conference of the Independent Labor Party. Although the conference at first passed a motion sponsored by the Marxist Group urging "independent working-class activity to prevent Italian Imperialism from receiving war materials for use against Abyssinia," this motion was fi-

nally submitted to a referendum of the ILP membership. At the same time the conference ratified affiliation of the ILP with the London Bureau and repudiated the idea of the establishment of a Fourth International. It also passed a motion prohibiting organized factions within the party, a move clearly aimed at the Marxist Group.⁵⁴ Subsequently, the Trotskyists were defeated in the ILP membership referendum by a vote of three to two.⁵⁵

Their defeat at the 1936 ILP meeting provoked a schism within the Marxist Group. Upham has noted that "it split three ways: those who thought that the ILP phase might usefully be prolonged; those who felt an independent organization might now be launched with success; and those who, after Trotsky, believed the time was now ripe for entering the Labor Party."⁵⁶

The Marxist League

Origins

Meanwhile the majority element of the Communist League, which had opposed entry into the ILP, moved in the direction of the Labor Party. They strongly supported the Labor Party candidates in the London municipal elections of March 1934 which brought Labor control over the London County Council.⁵⁷

However, during the first half of 1934 the Communist League majority group did not practice entrism. Martin Upham has noted that "internally, League affairs were not happy. Groves thought the national committee 'very feeble' and functioning as a collection of factions rather than as a national body. The League's main strength was the two strong locals of Balham and Chelsea, though there were several smaller local groups. It had a definite asset in *The Red Flag*, and continued to turn out its distinctively produced leaflets on issues of the hour."⁵⁸

During the summer of 1934 the Commu-

nist League finally joined the Balham and Footing Divisional Labor Party. As Upham has noted, "The CL turn towards the Labor Party is a rare instance from the annals of British Trotskyism where joining or leaving a larger party did not cause a split."⁵⁹

He adds that "those who were well-known figures in their locality (Wicks in Battersea, Groves in Balham) started with an advantage. In Wimbledon, Henry Sara was short-listed for a parliamentary candidature. Groves was actually selected as delegate from the Balham and Tooting division of the 1934 Labor Party conference with near unanimous backing, though he was in the end barred by the NEC. . . . Also on the wider stage, Wicks was able, as a Labor Party member, to secure a delegate's place at a conference summoned by the London Trades Council, from which body he had been excluded for many years."⁶⁰

In November 1934 *The Red Flag* was converted from a newspaper to a magazine, but apparently only one issue of the new version of the periodical appeared. Martin Upham has noted that "for more than a year, until the start of 1936, there is no evidence of internal life inside the CL. Possibly the loss of a paper which could only claim a limited impact in any case was considered only a small sacrifice for securing a place inside the Labor Party."⁶¹

In January 1936 a new *Marxist Bulletin* appeared as the organ of the Marxist League, the new name of the Communist League. It contained two articles by Trotsky.⁶² Then in May 1936 *The Red Flag* appeared once again as "the organ of the Marxist League." It promised "the presentation and application of revolutionary Marxism."⁶³ This time the paper continued to be published until October 1937 when the Marxist League was formally dissolved.⁶⁴

Within the Labor Party the Communist League/Marxist League group worked principally within the Socialist League (SL). This was a group headed by Sir Stafford Cripps, which was made up principally of ex-ILPers

who had refused to quit the Labor Party when the ILP did so in 1932, and it was the principal left group within the Labor Party at that time. Within the Socialist League the Trotskyists faced strong opposition from Stalinist elements who were also working within the SL.⁶⁵

The Trotskyists arrived in the Socialist League at exactly the moment when the SL had decided to try to become a "mass organization." It welcomed the cooperation of the experienced Trotskyist leaders in this effort. Martin Upham has noted that the Trotskyists' influence by 1935 in the SL "is apparent in the activities of Groves who was speaking on League platforms from May and in the autumn published a pamphlet on the importance of trades councils on the League's behalf."⁶⁶ In September 1935 Groves became London area secretary of the Socialist League and in September 1936 was named London Region representative on the National Council of the SL.⁶⁷

In spite of the growing influence of at least some of the Trotskyists in the Socialist League, they did not use this influence in the latter part of 1936 to openly criticize tendencies in the SL to which they were clearly opposed. Most particularly, *The Red Flag* did not appear in exactly that period in which negotiations were in progress among the Socialist League, ILP and Communist Party to sign a "Unity Agreement." As Upham has noted, "When Groves and the paper joined battle in January 1937, the issue was already resolved."⁶⁸

The Unity Agreement brought about a decision of the National Executive Committee of the Labor Party that made Socialist League membership incompatible with membership in the Labor Party. At a conference of the Socialist League in May 1937, the leadership therefore recommended the dissolution of the organization. The Trotskyists offered a counter proposal to maintain the League as an independent organization. They lost by a vote of fifty-one to ten.⁶⁹

A month later an attempt was made to establish an organization which could con-

tinue the work of the Socialist League in the Labor Party. This was the Socialist Left Federation, but according to Martin Upham it never got more than one hundred members. Reg Groves was its chairman and most of the other prominent Marxist Leaguers were in its executive. It expired late in 1938.⁷⁰

Reg Groves's Parliamentary Campaign

One important activity of the Marxist League in the Labor Party during this period centered on the parliamentary campaign waged by Reg Groves. He had been named as prospective candidate by the Mid-Bucks Divisional Labor Party in April 1937, and after the resignation of the sitting Conservative M.P. there was an election in May 1938.

With the election coming shortly after Hitler's annexation of Austria, Popular Front sentiment tended to be running high on the left. Groves was under considerable pressure to retire in favor of the candidate of the Liberals, who had always run second in the constituency. Groves resisted this pressure and carried on a very active campaign.

For the most part, Groves got strong support from the Labor Party press in spite of his known Trotskyist antecedents. He was violently denounced by the *Daily Worker* and leaders of the Communist Party as being backed by "the forces of reaction," and the Communists urged their followers to vote for the Liberal. Although the National Office of the Labor Party had at first sought to get Reg Groves to retire his candidacy, they supported him when he refused. At one campaign meeting Harold Laski, Ellen Wilkinson, and D. H. Pritt, all of whom favored the Popular Front idea, appeared on his platform. Groves was also backed by the Independent Labor Party.

When the votes were counted the Conservative nominee won, with twice the votes of the Liberal, who came in second. Groves received 3,560 votes more than the Labor

Party candidate had received in the previous general election.

Groves continued for some years to be the Labor Party's prospective candidate for the Mid-Bucks constituency, though he was never elected. Nevertheless, this was the only time during the prewar period that a Trotskyist had run for parliament.⁷¹

The Bolshevik-Leninists in the Labor Party

A second Trotskyist group in the Labor Party in the latter part of the 1930s consisted of people who had originally gone into the ILP but had then changed their minds and decided to work within the Labor Party's Labor League of Youth (LLY). Bornstein and Richardson have noted that "its original nucleus was K. F. Alexander, Roma Dewar and Denzil Harber—who was out of the ILP group almost as soon as it was formed."⁷² Alexander was a Canadian, and the group was soon joined by Charles van Gelderen, a South African Trotskyist who had recently moved to Britain.⁷³

In 1935 the LLY Trotskyist group began publishing a paper, *Youth Militant*, the first issue of which called itself "the organ of people in 'various' youth groups—including the ILP guild." In the beginning of their participation in the LLY the Trotskyist group worked with the Stalinists, and Roma Dewar was first elected to the National Council of the Labor League of Youth as candidate of a bloc in which both the Trotskyists and Stalinists participated. The alliance with the Stalinists soon ended; nonetheless, Roma Dewar remained the only Trotskyist on the LLY National Council.⁷⁴

The orientation of those Trotskyists who first began to work in the Labor League of Youth was summed up by John Archer: "They believed that 'entry' in the Labor League of Youth would necessarily have a short perspective. The reformists and the Stalinists could not tolerate their activity, and they had to be alert to seize the best

moment to forestall the inevitable expulsions and lead a break-away."⁷⁵

The Trotskyists in the League of Youth soon extended their activities to the Labor Party itself. They formed a "clandestine" Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the Labor Party in mid-1936. Its objective was defined as being "to disseminate in the so-called 'organized' Labor Movement the principles of the Trotskyists, to form a wider group around certain points and build up a 'militant' wing to advocate openly the Fourth International and its whole program."

However, the Bolshevik-Leninists saw themselves as following closely the entrism policies then being advocated by Trotsky and the International Secretariat. At the annual conference of the Labor League of Youth at Eastertime 1936, the Trotskyists around *Youth Militant* had four delegates and the Marxist League also had four. Their strength at the meeting was reflected in the fact that Roma Dewar received ninety votes for leadership of the organization, compared to 110 for a "reformist" and 120 for the Stalinist nominee.⁷⁶

The Bolshevik-Leninists in the Labor Party were soon joined by another small element. This was the so-called Hyde Park Group, organized by Jock Haston after he had left the Communist Party over the debacle of the German CP. It existed from 1934 through 1936 and devoted its attention principally to studying and selling pamphlets by Trotsky produced by his U.S. followers.⁷⁷

British Trotskyists at the Geneva Conference

Several factions of British Trotskyism were represented at the so-called First International Conference for the Fourth International of July 1936, which was allegedly held in Geneva (Genève), Switzerland, but in fact met in Paris.⁷⁸ C. L. R. James represented the Marxist Group in the ILP, while Denzil Harber was there for the Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the Labor Party, and two other unidentified delegates were present.⁷⁹ The

Groves group was not represented, reportedly not having the money needed to send a delegate.⁸⁰

The Bolshevik-Leninist Group presented a document entitled "The British Perspective," which John Archer has maintained "contained the most developed formulation of the 'entrists' perspective up to that time, probably drafted by Harber." This document noted that a "boomlet" was under way in the British economy and could be expected to continue, and that it would generate new militancy on the part of the labor movement. This would force the appearance of militancy on the leaders of the unions and the Labor Party, but with inevitable disillusionment among many of the workers, those disillusioned could be expected to turn principally towards the Communist Party, which "seems to them the revolutionary alternative." As for the Trotskyists' role? "We must go to the masses, interpreting their own experiences to them, until the time is ripe to break away to form . . . the British Section of the Fourth International."⁸¹

The Geneva conference adopted a resolution of its British Commission, which stressed "a most urgent necessity to effect in the shortest possible period of time unification of the three English groups. . . . The experience inside the ILP should be brought to a close, and the group now functioning within that organization should transfer its field of operations to the mass organizations, specifically to the Labor Party and the Labor League of Youth. . . . The concrete means of effecting their departure from the ILP and their entry into the Labor Party and the Youth organization, as well as affecting the unification of the forces of the Fourth International in England within the Labor Party, must be left to the English comrades to elaborate. . . ."⁸²

The October 1936 Conferences and Their Aftermath

In October 1936 two Trotskyist conferences were held in London. On October 10 the

Marxist Group in the ILP held its meeting. It narrowly adopted a resolution introduced by C. L. R. James which was "an all-embracing proposal, that the three groups should fuse, and that the resulting group, which would not be strong enough to work completely in the open, would do fraction work both in the Labor Party and in the ILP. . . . The Labor Party would be the main field of work, but no one would be asked to leave the ILP if they did not wish to do so. The new group would adopt, and sell, the new journal, which James had managed to produce on his own initiative, and which called openly for the Fourth International." This new journal was called *Fight*.⁸³

On the next day a "Conference of All the British Bolshevik-Leninists" convened. It received reports on the membership and strength of two of the three Trotskyist groups. The Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the Labor Party, headed by Denzil Harber and Ken Alexander, said that it had sixty members in London, of whom forty were in the Labor League of Youth. Sales of its periodical *Youth Militant* were reported to be 800. It had had increases in membership with people coming from "the Labor Party, the Marxist Group of the ILP and thirteen ex-Communists."⁸⁴ The Marxist Group in the ILP claimed forty members in London and forty in the provinces, and had just sold 1,800 copies of *Fight*. It reported having some members on local trade councils. The Groves group, the Marxist League, did not provide information about its size.⁸⁵

The Harber-Alexander group reported that it had sought joint meetings with the Groves faction, but had been unsuccessful. It had also sought cooperation with the Trotskyists inside the ILP on specific issues, but that more general cooperation had proven difficult. It added that "the James resolution . . . with its insistence that the main field of work is in the Labor Party provides a basis for at least a discussion of the possibility of fusion of all the groups."⁸⁶

Martin Upham has noted that at this con-

ference. "The Marxist League's attitude was that the widest possible diffusion of Bolshevik-Leninists was desirable . . . it believed the time for exclusive work in the Labor Party was coming to an end. Growing collaboration of the Labor Party with the government would drive the workers left-ward, possibly in the direction of a new revolutionary party comprising the left, the League of Youth, and the ILP. . . . A concerted drive by the Bolshevik-Leninists would bring the creation of the new revolutionary section nearer."⁸⁷

The meeting set up a Coordinating Committee "which, it was hoped, would 'serve as a cohesive force to all the groups, with a view to organizational fusion, make arrangements so that the journals should supplement and not overlap or compete with each other, institute a plan of joint work and produce a joint political thesis and internal bulletin.'"⁸⁸ However, John Archer has commented that "the Committee carried out, in fact, none of these, and after its first meeting, the Harber Group pointed to the underlying difficulty in a statement which asked: Did the Marxist Group still cling to the ILP as the main field of work while paying lip-service to the need for more work in the Labor Party? Fusion could not be reached without agreement on a common tactic."⁸⁹

Meanwhile, C. L. R. James and several others who were associated with the editing of *Fight* were expelled from the Independent Labor Party soon after the October conferences because of the clear call of the journal for the establishment of the Fourth International. Soon afterward the International Secretariat wrote the Marxist Group in the ILP, criticizing it for not "counter attacking" and particularly regretting that it had not denounced the ILP's participation in an October 1936 meeting of the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity, the so-called London Bureau.

On November 15 the Marxist Group agreed to a proposal by James that they withdraw from the ILP and establish an "open"

Trotskyist organization. However, a meeting of the International Bureau in December criticized this move, saying that "if we stay outside, we shall be considered as powerless and incurable sectarians, who fear contact with the masses, but who want to impose themselves on the masses as sage counselors, from outside."⁹⁰

This move of the International provoked the Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the Labor Party, led by Harber, to suggest that the International Bureau remove recognition from both the Groves group, which was distributing material of the non-Trotskyist Spanish *POUM* and was opposing distribution of *Youth Militant* within Sir Stafford Cripps' Socialist League, and the Marxist Group of the ILP which was "moving away from Trotskyism in an ultra-left direction," and recognize only the Harber faction. The Bureau rejected this suggestion.⁹¹

Transformation of the Bolshevik-Leninists Into the Militant Group

The Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the Labor Party decided in January 1937 to come out into the open within the Labor Party as the Militant Group. It started publication of a monthly periodical *Militant*, which continued to appear until the end of 1939. John Archer has noted that "The *Militant* tried to present a programme of Trotskyism in concrete terms for workers oriented towards the Labor Party. It attacked Social-Democracy and Stalinism in the context of resistance to the war-plans of British imperialism and published news of the movement to the Fourth International. It accepted that it could not call directly for the Fourth International, for the reasons that the reformist bureaucrats would seize on this pretext to drive the group out prematurely, on an issue which the workers whom it needed time to influence would not immediately understand."⁹²

So long as the Socialist League existed, the Militant Group sought to prevent its

dissolution. After it was dissolved, they tried to help bring into existence the new group to replace it, the Socialist Left Federation. There they ran into conflict with the Groves group, which was also working in the Federation. The secretary of the Militant Group, Starkey Jackson, reported in August 1937 that "the Socialist Left Federation is a small organization of about 100 members, but is in contact with hundreds of ex-Socialist Leaguers, and we could gain contact with these comrades through the SLF. The platform of the SLF certainly doesn't come up to the programme which we would advance, but it is in no sense a final programme." He expressed hope that the Militant Group could gain control of the Federation "despite Groves and Co." However, although the SLF leaders had apparently at first welcomed the Militant Group into its ranks, in November 1937 the Militants were finally expelled from the Socialist Left Federation.⁹³

A national conference of the Militant Group met in August 1937. It was reported to the conference that the group had fifteen branches, of which eight were in the London area, the rest in Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Hull, Sheffield, Leicester, and Norwich. It had about one hundred members "and their reports give an impression of lively activity." The conference endorsed work in the Socialist Left Federation.⁹⁴

Late in 1937 the Militant Group established the Militant Labor League as their rival to the Socialist Left Federation. Of it, Martin Upham has said that "it was a front for the Militant Group itself and at no time achieved an independent existence." At its first congress it claimed 150 members, and it was also said that the newspaper *Militant*, which it took over from the Militant Group, was reportedly being published with a run of 2,000 copies.⁹⁵

Although the Militant Labor League (MLL) took a very Leninist position with regard to the coming war (that is, that it would be a conflict between those countries with colonies and those without them, and that the

"real enemy was at home"), it did not publicly advocate either the establishment of a new revolutionary party or a Fourth International. It called for a "Third Labor Government." After the MLL's first conference, "Transport House began to watch the League."⁹⁶ (Transport House was the Labor Party headquarters).

About a month after the August 1937 conference of the Militant Group a split occurred in the organization. The splitters, who consisted principally of the Paddington branch of the Group, and were at first led by a South African, Ralph Lee, formed the Workers International League (WIL).⁹⁷

The Trotsky Defense Committee

During the 1936-1938 period one of the major activities of the British Trotskyists, as with their colleagues in other countries, was that of rallying support for Trotsky against the charges which were made against him at the Moscow Trials. For peculiar reasons of British politics at that time, they were less successful in these efforts than were their French, and particularly their American comrades.

Immediately after the first Moscow Trial in August 1936, Trotsky had called for the establishment of an impartial international committee to pass judgment on the charges which had been made against him during it. His followers in Great Britain took up this call and set to work to rally British support for such a commission of inquiry.

One of their problems was the fact that they were split into three different and quarreling groups. Most of the work on the issue was done by people associated with the Marxist League. Two of its members, Harry Wicks and Hilary Sumner-Boyd, were the successive secretaries of the Defence Committee, and Henry Sara and Hugo Dewar regularly attended its meetings. Of the Militant Group, Ken Alexander and Starkey Jackson often attended its meetings, but members of the Marxist Group (recently of

the ILP] seldom did. Stuart Purkis, who by then was no longer affiliated with any of the Trotskyist factions, also took a very active part in the work of the Defence Committee.

By the end of November 1936 a Provisional Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky had been established and a letter from it was published soon afterwards in the *Manchester Guardian* and several other papers, protesting against the Norwegian government's forbidding Trotsky to make any public statement and calling for an international commission of inquiry. This document was signed by H. N. Brailsford, Frank Horrabin, Conrad Noel, Fred Shaw, Rowland Hill, Eleanor Rathbone, Garry Allingham, Reg Groves, Harry Wicks and Stuart Purkis. As it turned out, Brailsford was soon to withdraw his support and Horrabin was only lukewarm in his.

The Trotskyists had great difficulties in rallying people outside their own ranks to participate in the Defence Committee, or to come to Trotsky's support. The only prominent Labor Party figure who addressed the meetings of the committee was Sidney Silverman.

Perhaps the strongest backer of the idea of an international commission and the most consistent critic of the Moscow Trials outside of the Trotskyists' ranks was Emrys Hughes, the editor of the independent left-wing newspaper *Forward*. But during most of the life of the Defence Committee it seems to have had little direct contact with Hughes.

There were several reasons for the failure of the Trotskyists' attempt to rally wide support on the Trotsky defense issue, as their American comrades were able to do. One was that Trotsky had little backing over the years among British left-wing intellectuals. Another was that with a few exceptions the British Trotskyists themselves did not come from the intellectual milieu. Most important of all was the fact that in this 1936-1938 period virtually the whole of the British Left, particularly the intellectuals, had

grave hesitations about getting involved in anything which was critical of the Soviet Union. In the face of the growing menace of Hitler's aggression there was a general feeling of the need for unity of the West European powers and the Soviet Union. There was similar widespread support for the idea of unifying all possible forces inside Britain to oppose the National Government and its appeasement policy—and something like the Trotsky Defense Committee seemed to undermine this unity both on a national and international level.

Nonetheless the Trotskyists did what they could to push the cause of the Defense Committee. Their own publications regularly carried extensive material on the subject, and they facilitated Trotsky's own efforts to place his articles on the issue in such British publications as would accept them.

The Defence Committee itself published a *Bulletin* for a short while. In February 1937 the committee sponsored a meeting attended by 600 people in Memorial Hall in London which was addressed by Sidney Silverman, Socialist League leader Garry Allingham, and the Trotskyists C. L. R. James, Stuart Purkis and Bert Matlow. They also tried to recruit British participants in the Dewey Commission, but financial constraints brought that to naught. The Trotskyists also published *The Case of Leon Trotsky*, consisting of Trotsky's submission to the Dewey Commission. The final act of the committee was a meeting in March 1938 at which Wicks and James spoke about the work of the Dewey Commission.⁹⁸

British Trotskyism: From Revolutionary Socialist League to Revolutionary Communist Party

Between October 1936, when the first joint meeting of the various Trotskyist factions took place, and July 1938, when some semblance of unity was finally established among them, there were various efforts to bring together all British Trotskyists in a single organization. These received extensive encouragement from the International Secretariat.

There were tactical and undoubtedly personal factors which made unification difficult. The Militant Group was committed to long-term work within the Labor Party. The Marxist League was also operating within the Labor Party but it was not at all certain that continued entrism was a good thing, and in any case, its relations with the Militant Group were unhappy. The former Marxist Group of the ILP was after early 1937 a completely independent organization not practicing entrism of any sort. The Marxist League was more friendly disposed towards joining with the Marxist Group than with the Militant Group.

On February 14, 1937 there was a meeting of representatives of all three factions, a meeting attended by Erwin Wolf (J. Braun) of the International Secretariat. Little came from this session beyond a statement of the positions of the three organizations.¹

The First Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL)

The first real possibility of making some progress towards unity came when in Octo-

ber 1937 the Marxist League (ML) decided to dissolve itself and end publication of *The Red Flag*. Soon afterward a majority of the former members of the Marxist League met and decided to make overtures toward unity with the Marxist Group (formerly of the ILP). A Joint Commission of the two groups with three members from each was established. It drew up a political statement which urged establishment of "a strong centralized independent organization . . . on the platform of the Fourth International." Martin Upham has noted that "the problem of where to be in the short term had been resolved in favor of a body separate from other parties, though the new body would aspire to organize workers in the established organizations."²

On February 17, 1938 a Fusion Conference of the ex-ML and the Marxist Group took place. Henry Sara presided over the meeting and Harry Wicks introduced the main debate. Although the Militant Group did not officially participate E. S. Jackson of that organization attended as an observer.

The new faction took the name Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL). It became affiliated with the Bureau for the Fourth International.³

During the next few months the RSL carried on a good deal of activity, particularly in holding open air meetings in London, Sheffield and other cities. Its members were also active in the Men's Guild of the Cooperative Movement, and in a few trade unions. Just before the July unity conference it was claimed that the RSL had doubled its membership since its establishment five months before.⁴

The Other Trotskyist Factions

The establishment of the Revolutionary Socialist League was only one small step towards unifying all of those organizations in Britain which proclaimed their loyalty to Trotskyism. These groups included not only the Militant Group but also the Workers International League, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Leninist League, a group of

Trotskyists still operating in the Independent Labor Party, and a dissident element of the Militant Group in Liverpool.

After the departure of those who left it to establish the Workers International League the Militant Group continued to work within the Militant Labor League and the Labor Party, and to insist that "roots had first to be sunk in the Labor Party before independence could be achieved." Its principal figures at this time were E. S. Jackson, Denzil Harber, Lee Davis, Margaret Johns, John Archer, and John Goffe.⁵

The Workers International League, originally formed by eight members of the Paddington branch of the Militant Group in December 1937, had begun to publish a periodical, *Workers International News*, which Martin Upham has called "the first theoretical journal of the Trotskyist movement in Britain." It was active in the Labor League of Youth and had sought recruits from Militant branches outside of London. By July 1938 it reportedly had thirty members.⁶

The Revolutionary Socialist Party was a largely Scottish organization which had broken away from the De Leonite Socialist Labor Party in the early 1930s and had subsequently evolved toward Trotskyism. It published, irregularly, a monthly newspaper *Revolutionary Socialist*, and its leading figures were W. and A. Tait and Frank Maitland. The party had branches in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Yorkshire. It had applied for admission to the Independent Labor Party and when rebuffed there, had written to Trotsky and made contact with his London adherents.⁷

The Leninist League, also based in Scotland, was associated with the followers of Hugo Oehler in the United States and was opposed to entrism. Its membership was principally in Glasgow.⁸

When most of the Marxist Group had left the ILP, those group members who controlled the Clapham branch of the ILP and its bookstore, which Martin Upham has called "a Trotskyist center throughout the

decade," did not do so. Their principal figure was Ernie Patterson.⁹

Finally, there was what had been the Liverpool branch of the Militant Group. It had broken from the MG in 1937 in opposition to involvement in the Socialist Left Federation. It was led by Don James.¹⁰

The New Revolutionary Socialist League

The Establishment of the New RSL

The first step toward wider unity of the various factions took place in June 1938. Harry Wicks, as Acting Secretary of the RSL, presented the Militant Group with a proposal for a conference to which the RSL, Militant Group, the Liverpool organization, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Workers International League, and the Leninist League would all be invited. The Militant Group replied by suggesting a unity conference of only it and the Revolutionary Socialist League. This idea the RSL turned down.¹¹

However, the plans for the Founding Congress of the Fourth International in September 1938 gave a certain sense of urgency to the unification of the British adherents of the FI. As a consequence, James P. Cannon of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States was deputed in July by the International Secretariat to go to Britain to try to bring the various factions together.

Cannon met with the leaders of the RSL, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, and the Militant Group. He also talked with a membership meeting attended by all thirty people who belonged at that point to the Workers International League. These discussions led to supposed agreement among the various factions.

What was called the National Conference of Bolshevik-Leninists met in London on July 30-31, 1938. The RSL, RSP, and WIL all submitted documents outlining the kind of

organization to be established, although the Militant Group did not do so.¹²

It was finally agreed to set up a single organization, to be known as the Revolutionary Socialist League, which was to have a full-time secretary and was to bring out a new periodical merging *Fight, Revolutionary Socialist*, and *Workers International News*. It was also agreed that, although major efforts were to be concentrated for the time being on work in the Labor Party, no RSL member who did not want to join the Labor Party would be required to do so. *Militant* would still continue to appear as the organ of the Militant Labor League and there would be an RSL internal bulletin put out every two months.

A new executive was to be made up of five people named by the RSL and Militant Group respectively, and two each by the RSP and Workers International League. It was agreed that the first national conference would be held in six months, at which time a new unified executive would be chosen. The provisional executive would choose the delegates to attend the Founding Conference of the Fourth International.¹³

In the end only the Revolutionary Socialist League, the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Militant Group signed this Peace and Unity Agreement. The Workers International League refused to do so, "despite appeals from Cannon to take part, resting on the argument that there could be no true unity until experience forged it."

The new Executive Committee named Denzil Harber of the Militant Group, Frank Maitland of the RSP, and C. L. R. James of the first RSL to be delegates to the Founding Conference of the Fourth International. Sumner-Boyd was designated a "consultative delegate" to the conference, and he in fact took one of the two sets of minutes of the meeting which have been published.¹⁴

The RSL and the Fourth International

The new Revolutionary Socialist League was accepted by the Founding Conference

of the Fourth International as the British Section of the International. A resolution "On the Unification of the British Section" declared that "the world conference considers the unity agreement entered into between the three previously separated British groups as an adequate basis for the development of the work of the united British organization in the coming period. It endorses the unity agreement and recognizes the organization based on it as the only British section of the Fourth International. All Bolshevik-Leninists, all revolutionary workers in Great Britain who desire to be enrolled under the banner of the Fourth International, are invited and urged to join the British section—the Revolutionary Socialist League."¹⁵

Of course one significant element of British Trotskyism stayed out of the new RSL. This was the Workers International League, sometimes referred to as the "Lee Group" after its first principal figure, Ralph Lee. The same resolution of the Founding Conference had some unkind words about them:

... as far as the Lee group is concerned, it is necessary to point out (1) This group came into existence some months ago as the result of purely personal grievances which impelled Lee and his friends to an organizational split. There was not then, and there is not now, any justifiable political basis for the separate maintenance of this group. (2) The leaders of this group resisted all attempts of the delegation of the International Secretariat to include it in the general unification. (3) The invitation of the IS delegation to this group to be represented and present its point of view at the world conference, either by delegate or letter, was disregarded; all we have is a statement, apparently addressed to the world at large, rejecting in advance any decision of the world conference not in accord with their untenable demands.¹⁶

The resolution went on to say that "under these circumstances, it is necessary to warn

the comrades associated with the Lee group that they are being led on a path of unprincipled clique politics which can only land them in the mire. The members of the Lee group are invited by the world conference to reconsider their decisions, to come into the unified British section, to take their place in the common work, with fair representation in its leading bodies and without any reprisals of any kind."¹⁷

Sam Bornstein, then a member of the Workers International League, has written (with Al Richardson) a rebuttal of this position of the International Secretariat towards the WIL: "The fact that the IS Resolution repeats these slanders does not make them true. The WIL membership of about thirty, mostly young workers and unemployed, did not have the material means to send a delegate (their continuously produced publications during this time, amounting to three times the production of all the other groups together, ate up all their resources). The statement to which the IS Resolution refers was entrusted in a sealed envelope to one of the English delegates (Harber) and was for the congress alone—not 'the world at large.' This stuff, I'm afraid, is the product of J. P. Cannon's factional hostility to the WIL group."¹⁸

C. L. R. James and Denzil Harber were elected to represent the British Section on the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International.¹⁹

The Revolutionary Socialist League

1938-43

Even the degree of unity achieved in the British Trotskyist movement in 1938 did not last for long. Martin Upham has summarized why: "The Revolutionary Socialist League was a failure. It did not hold together and it proved unable to capitalize on war-time opportunities. The Marxist League cadre drifted away from it to joint activities against military measures with dissidents inside and outside the Labor Party. The RSP

refused any kind of Labor Party work, tried independence, and later entered the ILP. The Militant Labor League was left in control of the RSL with official backing from the International. But from 1940 it stagnated within the Labor Party and fell out with the International over the correct line to be advocated against the war. These two factors added to a third, the contrast presented by the growth of the WIL, gave rise to intense factionalism and the effective separation of the RSL into three parts."²⁰

The Revolutionary Socialist Party contingent totally rejected work within the Labor Party and distrusted the RSL's general orientation toward the Labor Party. During and after the Munich crisis it carried on effective antiwar agitation through street meetings and pamphlets. The departure at about the same time to the United States of C. L. R. James, whom the RSP people looked upon as the principal leader of the RSL favoring work outside of Labor, and the intermittent publication of *Workers Fight* which was supposed to be the RSL's "open" paper, intensified the suspicions of the elements from the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

Although a referendum in the RSP in October 1938, its adherence was more apparent than real. At the February 1939 National Conference of the RSL it was announced that unification with the RSP was still to be achieved. It never was, most of the RSP members joining the Labor Party or the Workers International League.

The old Marxist League people took the lead soon after establishment of the RSL in organizing the Socialist Anti-War Front (SAWF) in September 1938. It was for a short while the principal organization based on the working class carrying on agitation against the war before and right after war broke out. The SAWF also participated in the wider No Conscription League. Some other elements in the RSL were critical of what they conceived to be the insufficiently revol-

lutionary positions taken by the sawf, and Harry Wicks and Henry Sara were expelled from the Revolutionary Socialist League in mid-1939 for alleged "pacifism."

Al Richardson has noted that Wicks and Hugo Dewar joined the ILP in January 1941 and there put out a magazine, *Free Expression*, which carried material by Trotsky. Dewar was the ILP parliamentary candidate in the Battersea Constituency in the post-war 1945 election.²¹

The former Militant Group members were dominant in the Revolutionary Socialist League. They continued to be active in the Labor Party through the Militant Labor League. However, in March 1940 the National Executive of the Labor Party declared membership in the MLL and in the Labor Party to be incompatible. As a consequence the Militant Labor League was dissolved, on the suggestion of the Executive Committee of the RSL.

In May 1940 it was even decided to suspend publication of *Militant* on the grounds that those associated with it might be expelled from the Labor Party. It was announced that a new theoretical journal would take the place of *Militant*, but it never appeared. For some time a *Bulletin of the British Section of the Fourth International* was the only periodical issued by elements of the Revolutionary Socialist League.

Militant began to appear again in mimeographed form in March 1941, and then as a printed newspaper in September. This time it was published in Glasgow, to which the RSL had transferred its headquarters during the London blitz. Finally, in December 1942, responsibility for *Militant* was transferred to a group of rank-and-file Lanarkshire miners among whom the RSL had developed some influence.

The Revolutionary Socialist League had three national conferences. The first was in February 1939, the second in September 1941, and then about a year later a special conference was held as a consequence of a bitter factional dispute then under way. Re-

lations of the RSL with the International Secretariat of the Fourth International were somewhat choppy, although the League remained the official British section during the 1938-1944 period. In spite of the difficulties which the RSL already faced by that time, the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International, held in New York City in May 1940, adopted a "Resolution on the Unification of the British Section" which strongly supported the RSL. The 1940 conference resolution commented that "the official British section of the Fourth International, Militant Labor League [sic] has achieved substantial progress in its work inside the Labor Party," but added that the conference "deplores the fact that no less than four groups claiming adherence to the Fourth International exist outside the ranks of our official section in Great Britain." The resolution declared that "the conference calls upon the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), the Workers International League (WIL), the League of Labor Youth (LLY) and all other groupings claiming adherence to the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky to realize the serious need of a single section of the Fourth International in Great Britain, and to give up their separate organizations and to merge with the Militant Labor League into one powerful organization."²² This resolution would seem to reflect a certain degree of ignorance about the actual state of British Trotskyism at that time. The attitude of the International Secretariat was subsequently modified. It brought increasingly strong pressure on the RSL to merge with the Workers International League.

Throughout its existence the Revolutionary Socialist League was plagued by bitter factionalism, leading to a series of splits. The first took place during the RSL's first national conference in February 1939 over the expulsion of two members of the Islington branch. The dissidents formed the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), which put out a periodical, *Workers Fight*. Although it

had some contacts with the Shachtmanites, the RWL did not adopt the Shachtmanite positions on the USSR. At first the RWL controlled the British outlet of the U.S. Trotskyist publishing house, Pioneer Press, but soon lost that "franchise." Some members of the Revolutionary Workers League joined the Workers International League, while others rejoined the RSL.

In April 1941 there was another split-off of a group from the right faction then existing in the RSL. The splitters established the Socialist Workers Group but at least some of those people eventually returned to the RSL. About twenty people, led by Arthur Cooper, joined the WIL.²³

Subsequently, the Revolutionary Socialist League broke into three separate groups. The major issues over which the factions struggled were work within the Labor Party, the Trotsky-Cannon position on how to deal with the war, and relations with the Workers International League.

One faction was the Left, which strongly opposed the position of Trotsky and James Cannon of campaigning for military units controlled by the workers, election of officers, and opposing evasion of military service by revolutionaries. Rather, the Left supported "revolutionary defeatism" such as that which Lenin had favored during World War I. The Left also wanted full commitment to work in the Labor Party and was absolutely opposed to merger with the WIL. J. L. Robinson of Leicester and Don Mercer of Scotland were its major figures.

The Right or Trotskyist Opposition accepted the Trotsky-Cannon line on war (as did the WIL). It favored concentrating Trotskyist activity on independent organization outside of the Labor Party and was favorably disposed to a merger with the WIL. Among its leading figures were John Lawrence and Hilda Lane.

The Center shared the Left's position in favor of "revolutionary defeatism," although it made some concessions on the subject. It was for Labor Party participation

but not with a long-range entrism perspective, and after considerable pressure from the International Secretariat came around to support of unity with the Workers International League. Its principal leaders were Denzil Harber and John Archer.

All three factions had their origins in the old Militant Group. However, their quarrels became very bitter and led to splits. First, the Center/Left expelled the Right. Then the Center, which controlled such "apparatus" as there was in the RSL, expelled the Left. By the latter part of 1943 there were three distinct organizations. When negotiations for unity with the Workers International League began, it was first necessary to have a "regrouping" conference of the three factions of the RSL, which met on January 1, 1944.²⁴

The Workers International League

Origins

The Workers International League was by far the most active of the Trotskyist groups in Great Britain just before and during World War II. Jock Haston, a former member of the Communist Party, soon emerged as its principal leader, although as we have noted it was first popularly referred to as the Lee Group. Ralph Lee returned to South Africa in 1940 although several other South Africans continued in the WIL, notably Ted Grant and Ann Finkel Keen.²⁵

The WIL had its origins in a group of workers under Haston's leadership in the Paddington section of London, who had joined the Trotskyist movement in 1936.²⁶ They were at first aligned with the Militant Group but broke away late in 1937. By 1938 they were publishing two periodicals, *Youth for Socialism*, aimed mainly at the Labor Party League of Youth, and *Workers International News*.²⁷

Martin Upham has stressed the importance of the WIL's publishing activities in its initial period. He has described *Youth for*

Socialism, the first editor of which was Gerry Healy, as being "a lively newspaper, given to exuberant abuse of communists and their fellow-travellers in the youth movement." He also has noted that *Workers International News* "regularly published Trotsky, a task no other faction of the 1930s regularly achieved." Starting in 1939 it began to emphasize contributions by its own members rather than by foreign Trotskyists. For seven months after the outbreak of the Second World War the *WIL* also put out a "daily handout," *Workers Diary*.²⁸

By the time of the outbreak of World War II the *WIL* reportedly had about fifty members. At that time they decided to send four of their members to Ireland to establish a printing press there and even possibly arrange for radio transmissions together with the ILP. Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson have noted that "the whole movement here expected severe repression on the model of the way revolutionaries were treated during the First World War, and the *WIL* wanted to ensure that their papers would continue to appear. It was all part of a carefully laid plan for clandestine work, which also involved sending Ajit Roy to make contact with all the *WIL* groups in the country." Those dispatched to Ireland were Jock Haston, Tommy Reilly, George Nosedá, and John Williams. Gerry Healy later joined them on his own initiative.²⁹

But with one important exception the *WIL* suffered little persecution from the British government in spite of its militantly anti-war position. Nor did any of the other Trotskyist groups. John Archer has attributed this fact principally to the presence of Herbert Morrison as Minister of Home Security in the Churchill Government. Morrison had been a conscientious objector in the First World War and was very much aware of the harsh mistreatment by the armed forces and others of those who had opposed World War I. He was determined that that kind of thing would not happen again.³⁰

With the outbreak of the war, *Youth for Socialism* proclaimed that "the main enemy

is at home. . . . Down with the war. . . . Defend the Soviet Union." Jim Higgins has noted that "they denounced the Russo-Finnish war and in an article by Gerry Healy called upon the workers to stand firm in defence of conditions and hours." They called for an end to the electoral truce which had been declared by all the principal parties at the beginning of the war.

In June 1941 the Workers International League launched a new paper, *Socialist Appeal*. In its first issue it presented a position on the war which was very reminiscent of that being taken at the same time by the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. It called for "Labor to Power on the following programme: 1. Arming and organizing the workers under their own control to resist any danger from invasion or Petainism at home. 2. Election of Officers by Soldiers. 3. Establishment of special Officer Training camps financed by the Government and controlled by the Trade Unions, to train workers to become officers. 4. Expropriation of the arms industry, the mines, banks, land and heavy industry. 5. Workers' control of production. 6. Freedom for India and the colonies. 7. A socialist appeal to workers in Germany and Europe for socialist struggle against Hitler."³¹

The line of the *WIL* during the war can be judged by perusal of a random issue of the group's paper, *Socialist Appeal*. The issue of June 1943 carried front-page articles in support of strikes then under way among aircraft manufacturing workers in Scotland, and transport workers. It also carried a front page article with the heading "End the Truce—Labour to Power," and on the back page a half-column article "Break the Coalition! Labour to Power on the following Programme," listing twelve points including dispatch of arms to the USSR "under the control of the Trade Unions and factory committees," nationalization of various industries, arming of the workers, freedom for India and the colonies, and various other measures.

This issue of *Socialist Appeal* denounced

the dissolution of the Comintern, which had just been announced, with a banner headline on the front page: "The 3rd International is Buried! Long Live the 4th International!" It also carried an editorial signed by Ted Grant on "The Need for the International." Finally, there was a full-page article entitled "Soviet Bureaucrats Live Like Lords," signed by Jock Haston, and on the front page were pictures of twenty-four Old Bolsheviks, most of whom had been murdered by Stalin.

The WIL engaged in bitter polemics with the Communist Party. After the change in CPGB policy following the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, the WIL referred to the CPGB as "His Majesty's Communist Party," and "Their strike-breaking activities were denounced and a policy of industrial militancy advocated in opposition to the Stalinist line of class collaboration in the interest of the 'Anti-fascist war.'" The Communists, who had never ceased denouncing the Trotskyists, reciprocated by publishing a pamphlet, *Clear Out Hitler's Agents*, issued in 1942 which proclaimed that "Trotskyists oppose and hate the leaders of Russia. They want to see Russia defeated and Hitler victorious. . . . Hidden behind their slogan 'Workers' control for Britain' is the Trotskyist aim to smash workers' control in Russia."³²

The WIL at first worked largely within the Labor Party. However, as a result of the virtual disappearance of activity on the part of the constituency groups of the Labor Party due to the electoral truce with the Tories and other members of the coalition government from 1940 on, the WIL went over to "open work," which was facilitated by their intense activity in the trade union movement.³³ They proclaimed that "entrism" was "essentially a short term perspective of work in a milieu where favorable prospects exist in a short space of time . . . such work must be subordinated to the general strategy of building the Fourth International party."³⁴

The WIL also reportedly had small factions in the Independent Labor Party and the CPGB.³⁵

The Workers International League was most notable for its "industrial activity," that is, work in the organized labor movement. During its last two and a half years it made considerable progress in that field.

Wartime circumstances strongly favored the work of the WIL. Strikes were outlawed "for the duration," thousands of young military draftees were sent to work in the mines, and emphasis on intensified production led to a great deal of speedup. The trade union leadership associated with the Labor Party overwhelmingly supported this situation in the name of winning the war, and generally discouraged movements of protest. After June 1941 the Communist Party, which theretofore had been the most important opposition group in the unions, was even more vehement in its opposition to any activities by workers which it interpreted as interfering with the production of goods for the war effort.

The WIL jumped into this situation. Martin Upham has noted that from 1942 on "it intervened in all major industrial disputes . . . and was more successful than any other party in its attempt to fill the vacuum left by the communists. . . ."³⁶

Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson have listed some of the most significant of the WIL's participations in workers' protest movements. They have noted "the workers' control exercised by the WIL Convenor and shop stewards in the Royal Ordnance factory in Nottingham, the successful sit-down strike they led there against transfers, the fact that the WIL industrial organizer Roy Tearse was engaged as advisor by the strike committee of the famous Vickers' Armstrong Strike in the autumn of 1943 . . . that the leader of the Tyne Apprentices' strike, Bill Davy, was a member of the group and at the same time was advised in his conduct of the strike by Tearse, Heaton Lee and Ann Keen."³⁷

Early in 1942 the Workers International League held a meeting of members and sym-

pathizers active in various labor situations. These came from Royal Ordnance Factories in Enfield and Nottingham, miners in the Northeast, and dockers from Liverpool. There were also contacts with Yorkshire miners who were on strike in mid-1942. From 1942 on the WIL published *Industrial News*, a periodical dealing with various labor situations.³⁸ It joined with the ILP and anarchists to establish organizations to coordinate protest activities among various workers' groups. These included the Militant Miners Group, a multiunion Committee for Coordination of Militant Trade Union Activity in London, and in Scotland the Clyde Workers Committee. In June 1943 a National Confederation of Workers Committees was organized.³⁹

Largely as a result of its industrial work the Workers International League scored considerable success during the first four and a half years of the war. It reported that by 1943 between 18,000 and 20,000 copies of *Socialist Appeal* were being sold and that its membership had risen to 250. Jim Higgins has noted that "what made this circulation possible, apart from fantastically hard work, was the growth of militancy in industry, which had been repressed by three years of war production. Conditions of work and safety were deteriorating and *Socialist Appeal* supported all attempts by workers to defend their conditions. Besides industrial reporting the paper carried news from members and readers in the forces exposing conditions in the detention centres as well as in the army itself, this in a period when the Communists were opposing strikes, black-legging, and allowing safety requirements to fall below the minimum."⁴⁰

The Revolutionary Communist Party

Unity Once Again

A bit more than a year before the end of World War II the Trotskyist forces in Great Britain were once again united. Negotia-

tions went on for about a year in 1943 and early 1944 before the reunification was agreed upon. Finally, on March 11-12, 1944 a unity conference was held with sixty-nine delegates in attendance, of whom seventeen came from the Revolutionary Socialist League and fifty-two from the Workers International League. This representation reflected the relative strength of the two groups, about seventy-five members in the RSL and 260 in the WIL. However, the RSL delegation was split into three groups, seven delegates representing the Militant group, six the Trotskyist Opposition, and four from the Left Fraction.

Martin Upham has noted the influence of the WIL in the unity conference: "Voting on conference resolutions reflected roughly a four to one majority for WIL policies. Indeed, the Fusion Conference generally was a recognition of WIL's wartime achievement. The main WIL leaders were all returned to the new central committee and there was no representation for the WIL minority."⁴¹

The delegates established the Revolutionary Communist Party. It was agreed that *Militant* would continue to be published by those Trotskyists remaining in the Labor Party and *Socialist Appeal* and *Workers International News* would be the official publications of the Revolutionary Communist Party. Jock Haston was chosen the party's general secretary. Jim Higgins noted that "the air was full of optimism. . . . The party was launched on the expectation of rising industrial militancy and war-weariness leading on to revolutionary victory."⁴²

According to Martin Upham, "The Fusion Conference was a watershed. It did not mark the end of factionalism, but it redrew the demarcation lines. WIL leaders felt that Harber and the RSL Center adhered loyally to the new setup, even though they still differed from the new party's leadership. The Left Fraction, of course, maintained its existence. But the Right or Trotskyist Opposition had some within it who were travelling in the same direction as the Healy group

within the WIL, and the fusion brought them together with, in the end, profound results."⁴³

The Left Fraction of the former RSL kept its own identity for some time. They centered in Scotland, where they controlled the *Militant Scottish Miner*, the successor to the old *Militant*, and for some time refused to turn over the paper to the RCP. Al Richardson has noted that they had voted against establishing the Revolutionary Communist Party and although joining it "were finally expelled in September 1945." They continued to function within the Labor Party, putting out a mimeographed periodical, *Voice of Labour*. However, by 1949 they had virtually disappeared as an organized group.⁴⁴

The RCP Until the End of World War II

During the seventeen months between the founding of the Revolutionary Communist Party and the end of World War II the British Trotskyists continued to be very active in the trade union field. They also played a modest role in the August 1945 general election which brought the Labor Party to power with an absolute majority in the House of Commons for the first time.

Labor Party leader Herbert Morrison, in his capacity as Minister of Home Security, submitted a memorandum to the War Cabinet on the Trotskyists at the time of the indictment of four of their leaders in April 1944. He was obviously quite well informed, and his memorandum cast interesting light on the state of the RCP immediately after its establishment.

Morrison reported that the RCP had district committees in London, Scotland, Tyneside, Merseyside, Yorkshire, and the Midlands, but commented that those "do not act without close consultation with Headquarters." Regarding the number of members of the RCP, Morrison reported that "no figures of the total membership are available, but in London, where the move-

ment is strongest, there are 152 members, of whom thirty-two are in the forces. Outside London, the party has about twenty branches. A branch rarely has more than twenty members and sometimes has less than ten, and the total number of members in the forces is unlikely to be more than a hundred. On this basis, the total membership is probably well below a thousand." He added that "sympathizers are probably more numerous than official members."⁴⁵

Morrison also offered some evidence concerning the financing of the RCP. He noted that "The Movement's income for 1943 was £2,654. Sales of *Socialist Appeal* brought in £781, and it is believed that Mildred Lee contributed most of her private income of £350. There were a few substantial subscriptions, including sums of £30 to £50, believed to have come from a Cumberland mill-owner, but the greater part of the total was received from branches and anonymous individuals in amounts varying from a few shillings to £5."⁴⁶

Summing up his assessment, Morrison wrote: "The Trotskyists are attracting workers whose discontent and desire to hit out at the employer and the Government can find no other outlet. They have achieved a small and localized but recognizable influence, and they are confident that the appeal of their militant program will become stronger as the strain and friction inseparable from prolonged industrial effort increases. They have a closely knit core of energetic leaders and a membership which makes up in enthusiasm what it lacks in numbers. . . . These advantages are temporary and unless the Trotskyists can exploit them much more rapidly than at present, it seems unlikely that they will ever rise to a greater position than that of sparring partners to the Communists, who would very much like to see the Trotskyists and their small paper suppressed."⁴⁷

The most dramatic industrial conflict in which the RCP became involved, and which brought them extensive publicity and the

only persecution they suffered from the government during the war, was the case of the apprentices in the Tyneside area. They organized a massive protest against the scheme of Minister of Labor Ernest Bevin to conscript some of the apprentices into the mines. Contact had been made between the WIL and this group even before the establishment of the Revolutionary Communist Party. In the mid-January 1944 issue of the WIL paper *Socialist Appeal* there appeared on the front page an article entitled "Tyne Lads State Their Case."

The introduction to this appeal by the editors of the Trotskyist paper said, "The attempt to lay the blame for the lack of coal production at the door of the workers was the lever by which the Capitalists, through Bevin, were able to take steps against Working Class youth. . . . These youngsters are undertaking a tough battle. They are showing a spirit worthy of the best traditions of the British Working Class. They will need every possible assistance, financial and moral, in their struggle, and it is the duty of the whole of the organized Working Class to rally to their side."⁴³

Their association with the Tyneside apprentices' strike brought down on the Trotskyists their only serious wartime persecution. Early in April 1944 the London headquarters of the RCP were raided by the Special Branch of the police, who confiscated issues of *Socialist Appeal*. Simultaneously there was a police raid on the home of Heaton Lee and Ann Keen in Newcastle, and other police raids on RCP leaders took place in Nottingham and Glasgow. Soon afterwards, Heaton Lee, Ann Keen, Tony Tearse, and Jock Haston were arrested and were charged with "conspiracy and acts in furtherance of a strike."

These charges against the RCP leaders were particularly striking because they were made under the Trades Disputes Act of 1927, passed by a Conservative government after the failure of the 1926 General Strike. These four were the only people ever

charged under that act. These facts aided organization of protests against the government's actions since the Trades Disputes Act had always been a *bête noire* to organized labor.

The RCP organized a Defence Committee to protest against the prosecution of the four Trotskyists and to help raise funds for their defense. These efforts aroused widespread support from non-Trotskyist sources, including not only the ILP but even from lower-ranking trade union officials. Understandably, they got no backing from the Communists who, on the contrary, vituperatively attacked the RCP and its indicted leaders.

The trial was held in June. The jury, on the advice of the judge, convicted all four of the defendants of acting in furtherance of a strike, but acquitted them of the conspiracy charges of which they had been accused. Lee and Tearse were sentenced to twelve months in jail, Haston to six months, and Ann Keen was released immediately. However, Judge Wrottesley of the Court of Appeal dismissed the convictions on the ground that the defendants could not be guilty of "furtherance of a strike" since all their actions had occurred before the strike. Pending the appeal Lee, Tearse, and Haston had been kept in jail, and they were not released until August 24, 1944.⁴⁹

It is clear that the British Trotskyists expected that trade union militancy and what they saw as disillusionment on the part of workers with both the trade union and Labor Party leadership, would continue into the postwar period. They felt that they would be in an advantageous position to profit from that disillusionment.

In addition to their work in the trade union field, the RCP had an essay in electoral activity, the first time that the British Trotskyists had undertaken such an effort as an independent party. One of the first activities of the RCP was to offer a candidate in a parliamentary byelection in Neath, in South Wales. Jock Haston was the Trotskyist can-

didate and the party put on a major effort. It was reported to the August 1945 conference of the party that "during the Neath campaign the Party distributed over 100,000 leaflets. We put up 8,000 posters and sold 15,000 copies of the *Socialist Appeal* and some hundreds of assorted pamphlets, 70 indoor public meetings were held, the two outstanding ones attracting 750 and 1500 workers respectively. . . . From having practically no basis in Wales at the Fusion Conference we now have three proletarian branches composed entirely of miners and steel workers."⁵⁰

The results could not have been as encouraging as the Trotskyites expected. The Labor Party candidate, D. J. Williams, won with 30,647 votes, followed by the Welsh Nationalist nominee W. Samuels, who received 6,290 votes; Jock Haston came in third with 1,781 votes.⁵¹

The official report to the RCP Conference in August noted that "the result, 1,781 votes for the Trotskyist programme in face of V-Day, the chauvinism of the mass organizations, the first incursion into the territory by the Party—was a very fine vote."⁵² However, it is clear that the Neath results did not indicate the kind of mighty surge towards Trotskyism by the British workers—even the miners—for which the RCP had been hoping.

Orientation of the RCP

The point of view of the new RCP leadership was made clear in an internal document of the party entitled "The Perspectives in Britain," dated June 6, 1945 right after the end of the war in Europe but before the end of the war with Japan and the Labor Party victory of July. The document commented that "the revolt of the workers will take place on the basis of a heightened consciousness on the part of the broad strata of the population. . . . With the end of the privileged position of British capitalism, and in its train the end of the privileged position of the British

working class, the workers will be thrown back to a period which the reformists have always regarded as the first stirrings of the Labour movement never to be returned to. . . . The period we are to live through will be the most revolutionary in the whole of British history."⁵³

The RCP document did see the possibility of a Labor Party electoral victory, but gave its own interpretation of this event. It said that "the Labour Party, in spite of the weak, vacillating character of the leadership and the direct sabotage of a victory at the polls, may be carried to power on the greatest wave of radicalization witnessed in the history of the British workers, affecting all strata. . . . In that event the advanced strata of the workers, already highly critical of the Labour and Trade Union leadership, will exert the greatest pressure on the labour bureaucracy to carry through revolutionary measures in the interest of the working class and against the bourgeoisie."⁵⁴

The RCP also saw developments favorable to it within the British Communist Party. The document commented that "experience will disillusion them as to the role of Stalinism in the international movement. Splits of groups are on the order of the day. A more favorable opportunity opens up for revolutionary work on the Communist Party than in the whole history of the Stalinist tendency. . . . With a bold revolutionary, yet comradely approach, to the rank and file, the Fourth International must win over the best elements in the Stalinist party."⁵⁵

In terms of practical guidelines for its own activity the RCP still clearly reflected the division of opinion over entrism into the Labor Party. On the one hand the document proclaimed that "These factors impell us forward to build the Revolutionary Communist Party independently and openly under our own organizational banner."⁵⁶ On the other hand it suggested that the existing situation "would immediately pose anew the task of throwing the full weight of the Party at the point of attack—the Labour Party, and

would pose point blank the task of illegal work, if necessary entry. . . . One thing is certain: the work of the Party fraction in the Labour Party will assume tremendous and growing importance in the next phase."

The RCP document concluded with a peroration: "In the coming days the Party must rise to the level of its historic tasks. It must penetrate all strata of the toilers helping to transform their militancy and aspirations for change, into a conscious understanding of their historic mission. Simultaneously, in becoming a Party of the masses, we must learn to translate our program into living reality. Learning together with the masses, we will prepare the way to build the mass Bolshevik Party which will lead to the conquest of power."⁵⁷

The RCP in August 1945

With World War II over and the Labor Party in power with the largest parliamentary majority it was ever to receive, the Revolutionary Communist Party held its Second National Conference in London on August 4-6, 1945. This was the first opportunity to assess the effects of unification of the British Trotskyist movement and to present a program for the entirely new postwar situation.

Although no figures were published concerning RCP membership, it was reported that it had increased 20 percent since fusion. The Second National Conference was attended by "36 accredited delegates from branches . . . and 13 consultative delegates. In addition there were 160 visitors. Fraternal greetings were brought from our French, Ceylonese and Italian brother parties."

It was reported that "in the trade unions the Party had made great advances. Almost the entire membership is composed of workers, 95 percent of whom are in trade unions. A large percentage of Party members hold shop stewards' cards and several are convenors of shop stewards in important engineering plants. The main advances had been made in the mining industry. The most sig-

nificant gain being a miners' official. We have comrades on more than 30 Trades Councils, and we also have comrades on several District Committees of the AEU" [The Amalgamated Engineering Union].

A report was presented on the RCP's participation in the recent general election. It was noted that "during the General Election our electoral policy of giving active support to put 'Labour into Power' and criticizing the Labour programs and leadership, had won us considerable contact with the Labour workers. Many of our comrades had been allowed to present our critical policy from Labour platforms. In one area, the new Labour M.P. had appeared on 5 occasions on our platform. Several of our party members had been employed as full time workers for the LP during the election. A close and comradely contact has been established with the Labour Party rank and file wherever our comrades worked."

The Second National Conference put forth the RCP's new political perspective, in the face of the massive Labor Party victory which had just occurred. This resolution said that "the election of 1945 marks only the first wave of the radicalization of the masses," and noted that "for the first time in any of the important capitalist countries of the West, the reformists have been returned to power with an overwhelming majority," and claimed that "millions in the Labour strongholds of the last couple of decades or so, voted Labour in a critical and skeptical frame of mind," and that "the attitude of the strata who have formed the core of the militant Labour supporters in the past is one of watchfulness and waiting."

In the face of all this, "Our party will have to reorient its agitation and propaganda among the masses on a different axis. . . . The next stage will be to concretize our transitional programme and attempt to harness and clarify the inevitable insistent demands of the masses for measures against the capitalists and in the interests of the workers." It added that in case of resistance to Labor

Government measures by the capitalists "we will demand that strong measures must be taken to clip the wings of these gentry; seizure of the banks, abolition of the House of Lords, monarchy, etc. At the same time, as an undertone to the main stress of our agitation and propaganda, which will be positive though critical, the conceptions of mass committees will be developed in industry and within the mass organizations to exert organized pressure on the labour leaders and assist them to deal with the employing class by means of workers control."

This resolution ended by saying that "at each successive phase of the struggle, the Trotskyists will campaign on the basis of proposed concrete measures in the interests of the masses and with the participation and initiative of the masses to solve the problems with which the masses are faced."

The full-page report in *Socialist Appeal* of the Second National Conference of the RCP concluded by saying that "the Second National Conference marked a great step forward in the history of the British Trotskyist movement, as of the working class. Despite our small forces in relation to the mass organizations of the Labour and Communist Parties, the growth of the Party and of the Trotskyist tendency in the course of the war, during which period our Party established itself as the revolutionary wing of the working class, was a heartening sign of the change which was taking place in the advanced sections of the working class. . . . Our comrades went back to their districts with renewed determination and vigour to participate in the daily struggles of the workers and to apply the principles of our International programs which alone is the guide post for the emancipation of our class."⁵⁸

British Trotskyism Since World War II: The RCP and the Healyites

The unification of the British Trotskyist movement, achieved early in 1944 with the establishment of the Revolutionary Communist Party, proved to be short-lived. The optimism aroused among most workers by the overwhelming victory of the Labor Party in the July 1945 election and the drastic reforms of the Atlee government during its early years reduced the industrial discontent the Trotskyists had exploited during the war. Furthermore, the sharp leftward turn of the Communist Party in the late 1940s, because of its support of the Soviet Union in the Cold War, allowed it to again assume leadership of whatever working-class dissidence there was.

The upshot of this situation was drastic reduction of the membership and influence of British Trotskyism and its division into a number of competing groups. All of these organizations continued to proclaim their loyalty to the ideas and policies of Leon Trotsky although most departed either in theory or strategy from the positions advocated by the founder of the Fourth International.

In the decades following World War II the Trotskyist movement in Britain was split into five major groups: the "Healyites," the International Socialist/Socialist Workers Party, the Militant Group, the International Marxist Group, and the "Thornett Group." In addition there emerged several minor factions, for the most part splinters of the major Trotskyist organizations. As a consequence, after a short review of the situation right

after World War II, the best way to survey subsequent British Trotskyism in this chapter and the next is to look at the evolution of the different factions of the movement.

The Revolutionary Communist Party

The Immediate Postwar Situation

The upsurge of the Revolutionary Communist Party in membership and influence continued for a few months after the end of World War II. One United States Trotskyist publication wrote several years later that "with demobilization, old members were returning with new members and sympathizers made in the Army. By 1946, the RCP numbered over 500 members. The circulation of the *Socialist Appeal* sometimes reached 15,000 a fortnight and rarely dropped below 10,000. The Party maintained a monthly theoretical organ. There were thirty established branches in the cities in 1947. The overwhelming majority of the members worked in factories, mines, shipyards, and transport and were open members. But every branch had one or two members functioning as fraction members in the Labour Party and where possible in the Communist Party."¹

However, the Trotskyists were soon faced with circumstances which almost completely undermined their influence, and which threatened to completely destroy the British Trotskyist movement. On the one hand, "with the formation of the Cominform and the violent turn to the Left of the Stalinists all over Britain, the great industrial gains of the Trotskyists were melting away . . . the young militants whom we were weaning from the Communist Party began to return to the Communist Party fold." On the other hand, "we had known for some time that the loyalty of the workers to the Labour Party was intense, but now [1948] the Labour Party was passing act after act implementing its promised reforms. No

one listened any more to the *Socialist Appeal* or to the Trotskyists."

This Trotskyist writer concluded that "in general, it can fairly be said that the Trotskyists politically were ground to powder between the upper and nether millstones of the Labor Party and Stalinism. We were not organized or prepared, politically or mentally, for the blizzard which commenced to blow in 1948 with such force as to sweep away the entire organization in twelve months."²

Activities of the RCP

During the four years after the war that the RCP continued to exist, its members engaged in extensive activity. As before, they concentrated considerable attention on the trade unions, although they no longer had the favorable conditions for their work which had existed in the last years of the war.

The 1945 conference of the RCP established a National Industrial Committee of ten people, headed by Roy Tearse, to coordinate the party's work in the unions.³ However, it was reported to the next national conference a year later that the committee had not been able to meet because of lack of sufficient money to do so. The major progress in the unions reported to the 1946 conference was leadership of a rank-and-file construction workers campaign in London, Glasgow, and a few other cities, for general improvement of wages and working conditions.⁴ Martin Upham has noted that "other disputes in which the RCP involved itself in the postwar years were those of the London transport workers, Glasgow binsmen, and at the Savoy Hotel."⁵

Such trade union strength as the RCP had continued to be heavily concentrated in the Amalgamated Engineering Union, where a base had been established by the Workers International League before the formation of the RCP. Upham has observed that a report to the 1947 conference of the party said that

its ranks contained "eight convenors, fifty-seven branch officials or committee members, nine district committee members, three area committee members and thirty-six shop stewards. There were sixty trades council delegates serving on thirty-five trades councils. In each case there was a strong presence of AEU members."⁶

This same organizational report to the 1947 conference stated that 79 percent of the members of the RCP were in unions (excluding those members who were still in the armed forces), and that those who were not were either ineligible for union membership or were housewives. Of the unionists, 35.2 percent were in basic industrial unions, 18.9 percent in "industrial service, transport or general unions, 36.3 percent in white collar or professional ones. Blue-collar membership predominated in the provinces, white collar in London."⁷

The RCP did not conduct much independent electoral activity. In the 1945 campaign it generally supported Labor Party nominees under the slogan "Labor to Power."⁸ The only case in which the party seems to have run candidates of its own were two people who ran in municipal elections held late in 1945.⁹

At the time of the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders, the RCP "ran a campaign . . . intended to explode the allegations of links with Trotsky made in Moscow between 1936 and 1938." This time they had somewhat more success in gaining the support of intellectuals than they had had in the Trotsky Defence Committee of the previous decade. The most famous figure that they were able to attract to the campaign was H. G. Wells, who had refused to have anything to do with the earlier committee.¹⁰

Several branches undertook to fraternize with German prisoners and win them over to Trotskyism. At least one RCP member was arrested in 1946 for passing out literature to inmates of a prisoner of war camp.¹¹

However, in spite of what Martin Upham has called "frenetic activity" of the RCP dur-

ing its first two years or more, "it was clear at the 1946 conference that the RCP was marking time." He added that "membership at 360-70 had fallen. The party had retained a national framework, and in London membership and sales of *Socialist Appeal* were rising. At a peak the party had twelve professionals, but after the 1946 conference the apparatus started to be pruned under pressure of the need to economize."¹² The relative stagnation of the party undoubtedly generated a malaise within its ranks which encouraged controversy and factionalism.

Issues of Controversy Within British Trotskyism

In this immediate postwar period there were to emerge three controversial issues among the British Trotskyists which continued to divide them for the next forty years. These were the "catastrophe perspective," the question of the nature of the Soviet Union and other Stalinist-dominated states, and the ever-present problem of "entrism" in the Labor Party. The first two issues were being debated throughout the Fourth International at the time; the third one was peculiarly British, although not unrelated to ideas circulating in the world Trotskyist movement.

After the war the Socialist Workers Party of the United States had adopted a fundamental document predicting that very shortly there would be a catastrophic crisis in the world capitalist economy, and particularly in the economy of the United States, which would usher in a period of revolutionary ferment throughout the industrial capitalist world. A bit later, Michel Pablo (Raptis) and others adopted a somewhat similar "catastrophic perspective," foreseeing the opening of a period of worldwide social revolution in which the Stalinist parties would play a major role (albeit against their will), making it necessary for the Trotskyists to try to find a place within the Stalinist movement. John Callaghan has argued that

this stance had its origins in the orientation of the Comintern in its first four congresses and in the writings of Trotsky in the 1930s.¹³

The British Trotskyists were divided on this "catastrophic perspective." The majority did not accept it; they presented their point of view in a resolution offered to the Preparatory Conference of the Fourth International in March 1946. This resolution argued that "the IV International will only discredit itself if it refuses to recognize the inevitability of recovery and it will disorient its own cadres as well as the wide masses in predicting a permanent depression and a slow rhythm of recovery in Western Europe when the events are going in another direction."

The British resolution went on to note:

The argument of the comrades of the swr which has been echoed by a minority of the English party, according to which it is only when the working class has been decisively defeated that American imperialism will give loans to aid the recovery of West European capitalism, has already been refuted. The proletariat has not been defeated but the loans are already forthcoming. Equally false is the argument that economic recovery and recuperation can only occur if the proletariat has been decisively defeated. . . . History teaches us that capitalism, even in a period of agony, recovers after a crisis, in spite of the revolutionary possibilities, if the proletariat is paralyzed or weakened by its organizations, and is made unable to profit by these possibilities.¹⁴

Gerry Healy was the major exponent of the "catastrophic perspective" within British Trotskyist ranks.¹⁵ He was to continue to maintain this perspective for the next four decades.

The issue of the nature of the Soviet Union, which had split the Trotskyists of the United States at the beginning of the war, was complicated after 1945 by the emergence of other Stalinist-controlled

states. The majority of the British Trotskyists, after sharing the confusion of most of their confreres in other parts of the world, finally agreed that the USSR and the other Stalinist-controlled regimes were "degenerated" or "deformed" workers' states.

However, "a grouping within the British Trotskyist movement developed the theory that Russia and the East European states were 'state capitalist.' The main theoretical elaboration was the work of Tony Cliff. . . . The 'state capitalist' theory stressed that what was central to the class nature of a society was not formal ownership, but control. The absence of workers' control in Russia was not a defeat in an otherwise progressive system, it was a clear indication that the system was in no sense a workers' state."¹⁶ Tony Cliff first put forward this "state capitalist" analysis in a pamphlet in 1948. It was to become the fundamental theoretical basis of the faction of British Trotskyism which Cliff was to lead after 1950.

The third source of controversy among the British Trotskyists was whether or not they should operate principally within the Labor Party. Here again a minority led by Gerry Healy favored entrisism while the majority opposed it. The leadership of the Fourth International also favored entrisism, arguing that there wasn't time before the expected economic crash and revolutionary situation for a revolutionary party to be built outside of the Labor Party.¹⁷

RCP Majority vs. the International Secretariat

During the 1945-1949 period the Revolutionary Communist Party engaged in bitter polemics with the International Secretariat of the Fourth International over a wide range of issues, both international and national. These controversies were a major factor in the disintegration of the RCP.

There were undoubtedly several reasons for the quarrel between the majority of the RCP leadership and the International Secre-

ariat. There was certainly disagreement over specific perspectives in Great Britain and the world as a whole, as well as controversy over tactics to be followed by the British Trotskyists. Equally certainly important personality conflicts were involved.

For one thing, James P. Cannon, and with him other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, had a long-standing dislike of the leaders of the Workers International League who made up most of the leadership of the RCP. After Cannon's visit to Great Britain in 1938 he had certainly been the inspiration for the deprecating denunciation of the WIL adopted by the Founding Congress of the Fourth International. This continued hostility was evident after the war. It was intensified when the RCP leaders gave some evidence of sympathy for the Morrow-Goldman opposition tendency which developed in the SWP right after the war.¹⁸

In addition, the RCP majority had a strong and influential enemy after the war in Pierre Frank. The French Trotskyist leader emerged after World War II not only as the major figure in the French affiliate of the International, but as one of the most influential figures in the International Secretariat after it returned to Paris from New York.

Pierre Frank had spent most of the war in Great Britain. As he himself wrote, he had "been in contact with numerous militants of the party and . . . was able to get a very good picture of the party itself, of its leadership as well as its membership. . . ."

Frank clearly shared Cannon's dislike of the ex-WIL leaders. His attitude towards the leadership of the RCP was shown in his report to the International Secretariat on the August 1945 national conference of the Revolutionary Communist Party. He wrote that "without exaggerating in the least, we must say very clearly that the conference of the RCP has shown—for anyone at all familiar with workers organizations—that the party is facing grave difficulties. Moreover, the main responsibility for these difficulties

rests with the leadership which has shown great concern, not to clarify political questions, but to maintain an uncontested hold on the organization. Our article aims to arouse the international organization, whose intervention is indispensable in aiding the party to surmount this situation. . . ."¹⁹

Of course as the controversy between the RCP and the IS developed, it centered on a number of "issues." One of these was a conflicting assessment of the immediate postwar perspectives, in Great Britain, Europe, and the world in general.

The International Secretariat adopted dogmatically the "catastrophism" of the leadership of the American SWP, arguing that a world depression more extensive than that of the early 1930s was inevitable, and was in fact taking place right after the end of the war, and that in any case the economies of Europe, and specifically that of Great Britain, could never return to the 1938 level. The RCP majority leaders refuted this argument, at least for the short run, pointing out that all available figures indicated that a recovery was underway in the immediate postwar years not only in Britain, but elsewhere in Europe. Although they did concede that this recovery would only last a few years, their recognition of its existence was regarded—and denounced—as heresy by the IS.

There was also disagreement over what was happening in Eastern Europe. The International Secretariat maintained that in the Soviet-occupied countries capitalism still existed and the only circumstances under which it would disappear would be if working-class revolutions would take place there, or if those countries became part of the Soviet Union. The RCP majority on the other hand, pointed to the obvious facts of the nationalization of most of the economies of those nations and quite early reached the conclusion that they were "deformed workers states," a stand which at the time the IS regarded as "revisionist."

The Yugoslav dissidence against Stalin was a further bone of contention. The *is* went so far as to see that development as a confirmation of the theory of permanent revolution, and to predict that the Yugoslav leadership would virtually become Trotskyist. The *rcp* majority was highly skeptical, pointing out that the Yugoslav leadership remained fundamentally Stalinist in its *modus operandi* and arguing that the only issue between the Yugoslavs and Stalin was that of national self-determination for Yugoslavia.

Finally, there was strong disagreement between the majority of the *rcp* and the International Secretariat on the tactics which the British Trotskyists should follow. From 1945 on the *is* insisted that the British should once more undertake entristm into the Labor Party. The majority of the leadership of the *rcp* held out for the maintenance of an independent Trotskyist organization, pointing out that its fraction in the Labor Party had had very little success in recruiting new members and that in fact the *rcp* was gaining more adherents from Communist Party defectors than from the Labor Party. Among the leaders of the majority in this period were Jock Haston, Ted Grant, and, after some hesitation, Charles van Gelderen of the former *wil* and John Lawrence of the old *rsl*.

In these controversies a minority of the *rcp* leadership, headed by Gerry Healy, sided with the International Secretariat. Even before the *is* declared in favor of entristm Healy had come to support the idea, and as controversy developed between the *rcp* and *is* on the other issues Healy went completely down the line with the *is* and against the majority of his own party's leadership.²⁰

Split and Liquidation of the RCP

The stagnation and slow decline of the *rcp*, together with its struggles with the International Secretariat and bitter internal fac-

tional fighting, had disastrous results for the Revolutionary Communist Party. It first led to a split in the party, and then to its total disappearance.

Early in 1947 Gerry Healy officially formed an Entrust Faction, the purpose of which was to win a majority for entry into the Labor Party at the conference of the *rcp* scheduled for a few months later. However, he had only about 20 percent of the membership behind him. Shortly afterward, Michel Pablo, the international secretary of the Fourth International, intervened to indicate to the *rcp* majority that although they had a majority in the British Section they constituted a minority in the leadership of the *FI* on the entristm question and all other issues pending between the two groups. He implied that if the *rcp* leadership did not follow the entrist line they could expect the most severe consequences from the International.

The upshot of this situation was the grudging concession of the majority of the *rcp* membership to allow a division in the party, with the minority which favored entristm to be free to go into the Labor Party, with the rest of the membership continuing to maintain the *rcp*. This was undoubtedly a compromise made by the majority at the time to avoid possible expulsion from the Fourth International. The split was carried out at the beginning of 1948.

The separation of the minority from the Revolutionary Communist Party only served to intensify its decline. Nor did it end the party's conflict with the International Secretariat.

By the end of 1948 the *rcp* leaders generally had come to the conclusion that the only viable tactic for what remained of the Revolutionary Communist Party was for it also to enter the Labor Party. This conclusion was challenged from two quarters. Strangely enough, the International Secretariat—which had so strongly favored entristm between 1945 and 1947—denounced it as "liquidationism."

On the other hand, a group of low-level

officials and rank-and-file members of the RCP formed the Open Party Faction. Among the leaders of this group were Sam Levy, Alf Snobel, and Sam Bornstein. Although they sought quite energetically to rally support in the party branches for maintaining the RCP in existence, they met with only very limited success. At a party conference in June 1949 the liquidation of the Revolutionary Communist Party and entry of its members into the Labor Party was agreed upon. The last issue of *Socialist Appeal*, announcing the dissolution of the party, came out in July 1949.²¹

The Healy Group

Early Years of the Healy Group

The RCP minority faction headed by Gerry Healy, which withdrew in 1948 to join the Labor Party, proved to be the longest-lived British Trotskyist group, still remaining in existence almost forty years later. When Healy and his supporters joined the Labor Party, they formed within it what came to be known as The Club. They soon organized a somewhat wider left-wing group within the Labor Party, the Socialist Fellowship, which began to edit a periodical, *Socialist Outlook*, to which, among others, several Labor Party M.P.s became contributors.²²

The paper was by no means an orthodox Trotskyist publication. Betty Reid, writing in the British Communist periodical *Marxism Today* many years later, claimed that "both the organization and journal were dominated by prewar Trotskyists, who had succeeded in involving a number of well-known Labor Party members," and that "the statement of aims of the new organization bore a striking similarity to the aims of *Socialist Appeal* published not long before."²³ However, Walter Kendall and James D. Young of the Independent Labor Party claimed that "*Socialist Outlook* evaded any serious criticism of Stalinism and acted objectively as an independent fellow-travel-

ling organization within the Labour Party, actually capitalising on the effects of CP propaganda."²⁴

With the dissolution of the Revolutionary Communist Party in 1949 and the entry of most of its remaining people into the Labor Party, Gerry Healy laid down conditions for their acceptance into The Club, the most important of which was that his early entrants should have a majority on the executive committee of the reconstituted Trotskyist group within the Labor Party. The last conference of the RCP decided to accept Healy's conditions.²⁵

This was not enough for Healy and his followers. As John Callaghan has noted, "Although this hegemony was supposed to be a temporary arrangement pending the establishment of a fully democratic regime at The Club's 1950 congress, Healy's leadership proved to be incompatible with any internal dissent. *Before the congress was convened* the executive committee of the Club began a series of expulsions. Among those who left of their own accord were adherents of Tony Cliff's state capitalist theory of the USSR."²⁶

At first the Trotskyists of the Club hoped that they could assume the leadership of the new Labor Party left wing which inevitably began to develop after the Labor Party had been in power for a few years. However, as Kendall and Young have noted, "The stern line adopted on the Korean War lost the Socialist Fellowship all its Parliamentary support."²⁷ This attitude on the Korean War undoubtedly also helped to provoke the official banning of the Socialist Fellowship group by the National Executive Committee of the Labor Party in 1951.²⁸ Even more damaging to the Trotskyists' hopes was the emergence of Aneurin Bevan as the major figure in the new Labor Left after his resignation from the Atlee government.²⁹

The Healyites and the Split in the Fourth International

The first reaction of Gerry Healy to the threat of a split in the Fourth International

which arose in 1953 was one of great caution. He wrote the American Trotskyist leaders Morris Stein, Ferrell Dobbs, and Joseph Hansen on February 19, 1953, that "the war seems to be getting very near. . . . My first feeling, therefore, is one of extreme worry—are we threatened with another international split? If so we must avoid it at all costs. Our movement must not go into the war, smashed up and divided." He ended this letter advising that "it is absolutely necessary to proceed as cautiously as possible (I know that you are doing your best) because we do not wish to have a split in our still very weak international movement."³⁰

However, by September 1953 a split was clearly looming within the British Section. Healy received a letter from the Bureau of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International "advising" him:

a. To circumscribe strictly the struggle on the political plane of ideas, conducting yourself as a member above all of the IEC and of the IS who defends until the Fourth World Congress the majority line and the discipline of the International. b. To cease to act as a member of the majority American faction and to await from it the political line to defend, and to cease to have circulated its documents in your faction in England, before you make known to the IS and to the IEC your eventual political divergences. c. To abstain from any organizational measure in opposition to the comrades in your section who defend, as they ought, as you ought to do yourself first of all, the line and the discipline of the International. d. To reach thereon an agreement with the comrades on the normal functioning of the organization, as a section of the International and not as an independent national unit.

The letter went on to say that the Fourth International leadership "will never accept the organizational measures which you have proposed against the defenders of the line and the discipline of the International."

It then continued, in a tone which seemed designed to insult and incite Healy, to urge him "Do not let yourself be carried away by your impulsive and authoritarian temperament. . . . Think again and again, without consideration of false prestige, pride, etc., but as a Bolshevik, Trotskyist leader."³¹

The principal figure supporting the Pabloite position within the British section was John Lawrence. At the beginning of the struggle, he and his supporters controlled both *Socialist Outlook* and its print shop. In a letter to Leslie Goonewardene of the Ceylonese Trotskyists, Gerry Healy described the efforts to take these away from Lawrence and his allies—which involved mobilizing shareholders of the two enterprises throughout the country, which they finally succeeded in doing. However, Healy noted that during the period that Lawrence controlled the newspaper, it published a number of pro-Stalinist articles, including one by the principal British defender of Lyсенko, the Soviet biologist whose theory of inheritance of acquired characteristics Stalin had favored.³²

A letter from Gerry Healy to the British Section dated January 1, 1954, summed up the balance of forces emerging from this struggle. This letter also cast interesting light on the extent of organization of the movement at that point. It noted that Healy and his supporters had fifteen National Committee members to six for the dissidents; that the latter had only thirty members in all; that Healy's followers included seven Labor Party municipal counselors, compared to two who had gone with the dissidents. It also noted that Healy's followers controlled the group's "industrial publications," the *Portworkers Clarion* and the *Textile Machinery Worker*.³³

The Labor Party Purge of the Healyites

In 1954 the National Executive Committee of the Labor Party sought to suppress *Social-*

ist Outlook, which had continued to appear in spite of the banning of the Socialist Fellowship. Morgan Philips, Secretary of the Labor Party, sent a letter to all trade unions, constituency and local party organizations, women's sections, and to the Labor League of Youth that said, "I am directed to inform you that the National Executive Committee at its last meeting decided that persons associated with it, or supporting, 'Socialist Outlook,' are declared to be ineligible for membership in the Labor Party."³⁴

The move against the Trotskyists might be seen as the first step on the part of the Labor Party establishment to try to get rid of the Bevanite opposition within the party. At the NEC meeting at which action was taken against the *Socialist Outlook* people, therefore, Aneurin Bevan "moved the reference back of the recommendation . . . and Crossman seconded it, but they were defeated by fifteen votes to nine." The Bevanites then sought to mobilize the party ranks to oppose the move against the Trotskyists. As a consequence, some 119 constituency parties passed resolutions which they forwarded to the NEC opposing the move.³⁵ Michael Foote wrote in *Tribune* that "the good name of the Labor Party requires that this stupid, cowardly and totalitarian edict should be rescinded at the coming Labour Party Conference."³⁶

The Stalinists, meanwhile, did their best to egg on the Labor Party establishment against the Trotskyists. While the purge discussion was in progress one of their periodicals, *World News*, "carried an article dealing with the character of *Socialist Outlook* and pointing out the almost hundred percent concentration in all managerial, editorial and business posts in the journal of prewar leading Trotskyists."³⁷

The banning of *Socialist Outlook* was not, in fact, rescinded. This proved to be only a minor inconvenience to the operations in the Labor Party of the Trotskyists under Gerry Healy's leadership. The newspaper continued to appear.³⁸

During this period, The Club began to gain something of a foothold in the trade union movement. In 1955 Bob Pennington, working as an organizer for The Club, established contacts with workers on the Merseyside docks. At that time there was great discontent among the workers there both because of their working conditions and the failure of the officials of the Transport and General Workers Union, who were supposed to be their representatives, to give them any leadership in trying to improve the situation. The Trotskyists were able to mobilize the workers in a number of unofficial strikes and for a while to get the Merseyside dockers to withdraw from the TGWU and affiliate with another smaller organization which was more willing and able to deal with their problems. As a result of their success with the Merseyside dockers, coal miners in Yorkshire sought out the Trotskyists. As a consequence, The Club was able to develop also some influence among those workers.³⁹

The Club and the 1956 CPGB Crisis

Until 1956 the Healyite group remained very small, with at most a few hundred members. The events of that year marked the beginning of a substantial increase in the membership and influence of the group.

As a consequence of Nikita Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, and particularly of the Hungarian uprising near the end of the year, the Communist Party of Great Britain suffered large-scale defections, particularly on the part of its intellectuals. A number of those leaving the CPGB soon joined the Trotskyists, particularly the Healy group. Among these people were Cliff Slaughter, Tom Kemp, Brian Behan (brother of the writer Brendan Behan), John Daniel, Ken Coates, and Pat Jordan.⁴⁰

The most notable Communist defector of all was Peter Fryer, who had been London *Daily Worker* correspondent in Budapest

during the Hungarian uprising and who had quit the Communist Party when the paper refused to publish his dispatches, which were sympathetic to the rebels. Soon after he returned to Britain, Fryer went on a lecture tour around the country under the sponsorship of The Club and drew audiences of six to seven hundred people virtually everywhere that he spoke.⁴¹

In April 1957 Peter Fryer launched the publication of a weekly entitled *Newsletter*, which he brought out in collaboration with the Healy group. As Stalinist writer Betty Reid wrote later, "Week by week old prewar Trotskyist names began to appear. A special issue dealing with the fortieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution had a very high proportion of contributors immediately recognisable as organized Trotskyists." In December 1958 Gerry Healy himself joined the editorial board of *Newsletter*.⁴²

Gerry Healy and The Club tried to exploit the crisis of the CPGB to the fullest. They issued an appeal to "all members of the Communist Party and Young Communist League," urging them to "immediately demand a special Congress to repudiate the leadership line on Hungary. Stay in the Communist Party and fight it out." Many CPGB oppositionists did so, but lost the fight. However, John Callaghan has noted that "most of the 10,000 who left the CPGB as the direct result of Hungary also left organized Marxist politics. Though Healy and Banda of The Club visited many of the leading ex-CP members personally, the highest estimate of defections to the Trotskyists is only 200."⁴³

The Socialist Labor League

Formation of the Socialist Labor League

On February 28, 1959, the announcement was made by the Healyites of the establishment of the Socialist Labor League, which held its founding conference on May 16. The

new group issued a May Day manifesto which proclaimed that "a new world communist movement pledged to do away with capitalism, to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and to support the Soviet workers' struggle for socialist democracy will bring to fruition the socialist revolution that began in October 1917."⁴⁴

On November 15, 1959, the SLL organized in London what it called the National Assembly of Labor. It was reportedly attended by "more than 700 delegates, observers and visitors. The New York *Militant* noted that 'there were 283 elected delegates representing factory groups, peace organizations, Labor youth sections, co-operative groups, colonial organizations, and Communist and Labor party groups.' " The conference unanimously adopted a resolution introduced by Gerry Healy in his capacity as national secretary of the SLL. This called for "an end to the manufacture and testing of the H-bomb as well as the destruction of all existing stockpiles of atomic weapons. The strengthening of the fight for the forty-hour week, higher wages, defense of jobs, and defense of shop stewards, against rent increases. A fight for the extension of nationalization, a fight against oppression in the colonies and against racialism in Britain. A fight against the bans and proscriptions inside the entire Labor movement and the trade unions."⁴⁵

Callaghan has argued concerning the resolutions of this Assembly that "in Leninist terms, the implication that the Labor Party had merely deviated from a primordially socialist identity, was a case of spreading illusions which could do nothing other than strengthen the forces of social democracy. Yet the group's precarious entrise existence imposed a logic of manoeuvre and adaptation precisely of this sort."⁴⁶

There were indications in the general press that the Socialist Labor League was to be taken seriously. *The Economist* of November 22, 1958, even before the SLL was formally established, commented that "six hundred members may not sound much, but

strategically placed, they can do a great deal of damage. The leading lights of the movement, moreover, are practiced political and industrial agitators." A bulletin in the summer of 1959 of the Economic League, an employers' group, noted that "the Trotskyist record in recent months is a wholly destructive one. They sought to prolong the official London bus strike, they captured the leadership of the last unofficial dock strike in the Port of London. They took a leading part in the pointless unofficial strike on the South bank site. . . . Trotskyism spells Trouble, wherever and whenever it appears."⁴⁷

Once again the leadership of the Labor Party sought to get rid of the Healyites. The National Executive Committee proscribed both the SLL and *Newsletter*, proclaiming association with them to be incompatible with Labor Party membership. The tone of the attack of the Labor Party establishment on the SLL is shown by an article taking up half of the front page of an issue of the organ of the Labor Party in the County of London. Headlined "Labour's Inside Enemy—Subtle and Treacherous. No Mercy for the Trotskyists," this article stated, "For far too long we in the Labour Party, being a patient and tolerant lot, have had to put up with a vociferous and well-disciplined minority whose purpose seems to be the corruption of the Labour Party from within by an alien influence. There is a group of Trotskyists at work within the British Labour Movement. It is these people with whom the Party must now deal." After reciting a number of the positions taken by the SLL which were not compatible with those of the Labor Party, the article said (in capital letters), "It is the duty of constituency Labour Parties to expel from membership any who are associated with the League or the publication."⁴⁸

Again, a wide range of people within the Labor Party opposed the purge of the Trotskyists. Michael Foote wrote in *Tribune* against it, and *The New Statesman* also expressed opposition. Once again, too, the Stalinists egged on the Labor Party NEC, their

leading "theoretician," R. Palme Dutt, claiming that the SLL was financed by "American imperialist gold."⁴⁹

Meanwhile, some of the ex-Communists who had joined the Healyites right after the Hungarian Revolution had left their ranks. *The Militant* of New York noted in January 1960 that "A prominent member of this general grouping of British radical intellectuals, Peter Fryer, has recently moved away from the SLL after several years association as one of its leading writers. At first he offered no political motivation for his shifts, then in statements to the press he accused the leadership of the SLL of employing 'Stalinist methods.'⁵⁰ The ILP periodical *Socialist Leader* reported a few months later that "Fryer, all the original Editors of *Labour Review* and many others left in protest against the policies and internal regime of the SLL." Among those thrown out was Brian Behan.⁵¹

The SLL and the Young Socialists

In 1959 and 1960 the Socialist Labor League became very much involved in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). This drive, which gained substantial middle-class support as well as backing from within the labor movement, scored a significant victory when the 1960 Annual Conference of the Labor Party went on record in favor of the unilateral nuclear disarmament of Great Britain. However, in the following year the Labor Party reversed itself on the issue.⁵²

The CND campaign put the SLL in contact with many young people and did so at a very propitious moment for the League. In February 1960 the Labor Party decided to launch a new youth organization, the old Labor League of Youth having been disbanded in 1955. A year after its establishment, the new organization, Young Socialists, reportedly had 726 branches throughout the country. As Ian Birchall has written, "There was a large new pool of fresh fish, and every Trotskyist grouping in existence was getting its fishing rod ready."⁵³

During the next few years the most successful "fisherman" was the Socialist Labor League. Its Young Socialists adherents were grouped around the periodical *Keep Left*. An antagonist of the SLL has written that "the SLL's belief that Russia was a degenerate workers' state led it to argue that Russian H-Bombs and even Russian nuclear tests were somehow a gain for the working class. Their perspective led them to see every flicker of the economy as an indication of impending slump and every outburst of racialism as an omen of imminent fascism."⁵⁴

By 1962 the SLL group had gained control of the national organization of the Young Socialists, although several other Trotskyist groups also had some influence in it. Factional fighting among the various Trotskyist elements led to a situation in which "whereas a couple of years earlier the Young Socialists had been a place where young people could receive a first introduction to revolutionary politics, a Young Socialists meeting was now such as to frighten away for life any uninitiated youth who might happen to stray in by accident."⁵⁵

At the April 1964 annual conference of the Young Socialists, the SLL leadership withdrew it from the Labor Party, taking most of the membership of the organization with them. The Labor Party then organized a new group, Labor Party Young Socialists, in which most of the other Trotskyist elements continued to operate. The older organization remained from then on the youth group of the Socialist Labor League and its successor.⁵⁶

From Socialist Labor League to Workers Revolutionary Party

The middle 1960s undoubtedly marked the high point of the influence of the Healyite faction of British Trotskyism. Henceforth they became increasingly isolated, not only from other Trotskyist elements—both nationally and internationally—but from major trends and events in left-wing British

politics. Although surpassed in size and influence in the 1970s by at least two of the other British Trotskyist groups, the Healyites did succeed in maintaining a substantial organizational structure and in raising very substantial amounts of money. The positions they took on several issues became increasingly idiosyncratic.

Within the world Trotskyist movement the Socialist Labor League did not join in the establishment of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in 1963, but together with the French Lambertist faction maintained a version of the International Committee of the Fourth International which had been set up a decade earlier. In 1971 the SLL broke with the Lambertists as well and from then on associated only with a few small organizations in the United States, Australia, and a handful of other places. We deal with these international developments elsewhere in this volume.

In Great Britain the Socialist Labor League did not participate to any great degree either in the student movement of the 1968-69 period or in the anti-Vietnam War campaign of about the same time. When they criticized the lack of democracy in the Vietnamese Communist regime and were rebuffed by the leaders of the Vietnam Solidarity Committee as a consequence, they more or less withdrew from further participation in it.⁵⁷

For some time the Healyites did maintain some base in organized labor. Cliff Slaughter, writing in *The Newsletter*, noted that "The Socialist Labour League worked for a big change in its trade union work from 1965 onward. Its members in the Young Socialists, having brought the vast majority of that organization out of the Labour Party at that time, turned to the trade unions as the main focus of work."⁵⁸

Starting in 1967 they began the organization of the All Trades Unions Alliance. A group of autoworkers in Oxford established the Oxford Liaison Committee for the Defence of the Trade Unions in September

1967. It called for a national conference of trade unionists which met first in October 1968, reportedly attended by "some 630 delegates and 125 visitors. . . . Represented were shop stewards committees, miners, building workers, clerical workers, engineers, railway workers, electricians and apprentices." It adopted resolutions "dealing with the speed-up plans of the bosses, rent increases and the fight of the apprentices."⁵⁹ According to the New York Healyite publication *Bulletin*, "The ATUA has made it clear that it is not a new trade union and rejects all forms of break away unions. Rather it is dedicated to the building of an alternative revolutionary Marxist leadership within the trade union movement."⁶⁰

Late in 1974, a substantial part of the Healyites' trade union members were expelled from the organization. About two hundred were thrown out in all, and "all seven branches in Oxford, two in Reading, and two in Swindon have been disbanded by the Political Committee," according to Alan Thornett, the most important figure among the dissidents.⁶¹ Subsequently, Thornett established his own Trotskyist organization, which we shall note in the next chapter. The departure of most of their trade unionists did not prevent the Healyites from subsequently organizing another All Trades Unions Alliance as the Workers Revolutionary Party's "industrial arm."⁶²

One unfriendly source has described the circumstances of this split-off of most of their trade unionists from the Healy group thus: "When the WRP recruited its television and film personalities, its class balance completely tipped over towards the middle class, and media people at that. Under the influence of their sensationalism, the whole group began to move to the position that the Tories, Labor, and trade union leaders were in a secret conspiracy to introduce fascism gradually. This made the working-class nucleus around Thornett quite incapable of operating in the trade unions—that sort of politics is alright for the theater queues, but

not in the factory. Hence the split—ripping out the WRP's trade union core."⁶³

At the time of the long miners' strike in 1984, the Healyites distinguished themselves by calling for a general strike in support of the miners. There is no indication that any part of the labor movement took this call seriously.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, the Socialist Labor League had been converted in 1973 into the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP). In conformity with its new status as a political party the WRP first ran its own candidates in the general election of 1974. It ran nominees in ten constituencies, and among its candidates were Vanessa Redgrave, the actress, whose candidacy received notice from as far away as Cochabamba, Bolivia,⁶⁵ and Alan Thornett, the auto workers leader who was to be expelled from the party later in the year.⁶⁶ Five years later, the WRP "stood sixty candidates throughout Britain and placed our revolutionary socialist programme before the masses."⁶⁷ In the 1979 election the party ran enough candidates to be entitled to free television time, and Colin Redgrave, brother of Vanessa, was the WRP's featured speaker.⁶⁸

The SLL-WRP

Idiosyncratic Positions of the Healyites

The political positions assumed by the SLL-WRP became increasingly unorthodox during the 1970s. In this connection, three issues may be mentioned: the further development of the "catastrophic perspective," the accusations against leaders of the American SWP, and the WRP's endorsement of the Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar Qaddafi.

Two WRP campaigns during the 1970s reflected the persistence of the "catastrophic perspective" which had characterized the Healyites since the late 1940s. In both cases the party kept insisting on the imminence of the establishment of fascism in Britain.

Early in the decade the party press claimed that the leadership of the nation's trade unions was working for establishment of a fascist corporate state. Thus, on September 6, 1972, the party newspaper insisted that "a whole section of the trade union movement has virtually declared itself for the corporate state." On another occasion, it claimed in reference to the leaders of the Trades Union Congress that "obviously men like Victor Feathers . . . are fully persuaded that corporate state control of the economy, where unions lose their independent role, is a good thing."⁶⁹

The WRP maintained that both the Labor government of the 1970s and its Tory successor were laying plans for a military-fascist takeover in Britain. *The Workers Revolutionary Party Manifesto '81* stated that "we warn again—the Tory plans for counter-revolution are well advanced. They began immediately following the defeat of the Heath government in February 1974 at the hands of the miners, and they have been gathering speed ever since. During the five years of labour government the preparations went ahead under the benign sponsorship of the Labour traitors who fear total revolution as much as the Tories."

According to the WRP, these plans were speeded up with the return of the Tories to power in 1979. *The Manifesto* claimed that "preparations have been made for the country to be divided into military sectors each ruled by a martial law administrator with its own pass system. They plan to isolate whole communities from each other and starve them into submission as the Bolivian miners were starved into submission."⁷⁰

Another *sui generis* campaign of the Healyites centered on the charges of Healy and his associates against Joseph Hansen and George Novack, both leaders of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. Hansen had served as aide and bodyguard to Leon Trotsky during his residence in Mexico. The Healyites charged that he had been an agent of the GPU, and had also worked with the

fab. When Novack came to Hansen's defense similar charges were made against him. The Healyites launched an official "investigation" of their own charges and developed a long list of accusations against the two SWP leaders and their party. These charges rehearsed known and suspected cases of GPU plants in the SWP and other Trotskyist groups in the late 1930s, contacts which Hansen had had with the U.S. Embassy after Trotsky's assassination, and claims of "criminal negligence" of Hansen and Novack in handling the security arrangements of Trotsky.⁷¹ Very few other Trotskyist groups of any faction took the charges of the Healyites seriously.

A final peculiarity of the WRP's policies in the 1970s and afterward involved the group's support for the dictator of Libya, Colonel Qadafi. A typical statement of the party with regard to Qadafi appeared in *Workers Revolutionary Party Manifesto '81*: "Similarly the Workers Revolutionary Party salutes the courageous struggle of Colonel Qadafi [sic] whose Green Book has guided the struggle to introduce workers' control of factories, government offices and the diplomatic service, and in opposing the reactionary manoeuvres of Sadat, Beigin [sic] and Washington. We oppose implacably the slanderous attacks of the capitalist media on the leader of the Libyan revolution and the General People's Congress which are a smoke-screen for war preparations against Libya by the Zionist-Sadat alliance. We stand ready to mobilize British workers in defence of the Libyan Jamahiriya and to explain the teachings of the Green Book as part of the anti-imperialist struggle."⁷²

Association between the WRP and Qadafi was more than editorial. A delegation from the WRP as present in Tripoli at the official celebration of the eighth anniversary of Qadafi's seizure of power on September 1, 1977.⁷³

One coincidence with regard to relations between the WRP and the Qadafi regime was of particular interest to other Trotskyist

groups in Britain and elsewhere. The Socialist Labor League had succeeded on September 27, 1969, in launching a daily newspaper, *Workers Press*, to be published Monday through Friday of each week.⁷⁴ A year later, a Saturday issue was added.⁷⁵ However, on February 14, 1976, the newspaper was forced to close down for financial reasons. At the time, the London *Sunday Times* asked the question, "What went wrong?" and answered it, "The money quite simply stopped coming in."⁷⁶

Three months later, in May 1976, the WRP was able to launch a new daily newspaper, *The News Line*. On May 7, 1976, that paper began the WRP campaign on behalf of Qaddafi with a long and enthusiastic article about the recent May Day celebration in Tripoli. Typical of this article was the passage, "Today the great release of revolutionary energy that began on September 1, 1969, will roar on non-stop till 8:30 in the evening; slogans, rhythmic, firm hand-clapping, the high pitched yodel that sounds like a battle cry. . . . Then President Gaddafi arrived to an enormous welcome."⁷⁷

The British Broadcasting Corporation did a program on the relations between the Workers Revolutionary Party and Libya early in 1983, in which they accused the WRP of receiving Libyan money to finance their newspaper. They even named the amount of money allegedly involved.⁷⁸

Internal Regime of the Healyites

The Healyite group in British Trotskyism became highly personalist and authoritarian. Quite early in his career, Gerry Healy had indicated his orientation towards that kind of politics. He wrote, "We are monopolists in the field of politics. To make a successful revolution in Britain, the working class will require to do it through one party and one program. We are the nucleus of such a party and our program is the Transitional program of the Fourth International. That is

why we are out to destroy all competitive parties. . . ."⁷⁹

John Callaghan has elaborated on the way in which the personalist and authoritarian nature of the Healyite group was developed. "All actual or potential challengers to his personal domination were expelled, while the bulk of the members consisted of raw recruits permanently preoccupied with the chores of political activism. This activism insured their ignorance of Marxist theory (and of the group's history) and resulted in a high turnover rate of members such that each year's intake was almost completely replaced by the next. This explains why the clique around Healy remained in all the top leadership positions without serious challenge, for the most part, despite the recurring failure of their politics to achieve the wildly optimistic targets which they set for the organization."

Callaghan adds that "Healy's technique for retaining control over the organization was simply to expel dissidents *before* their opposition could crystallize into a coherent tendency or faction. . . . Thus the expulsions of 1949 (ex-members of the RCP Majority), 1958 (Peter Cadogan, Ken Coates), 1959 (Behan, MacIntyre, and supporters) and 1974 (Alan Thornett and supporters) all took place immediately prior to the group's next conference. . . ."⁸⁰

Callaghan has also suggested that the nature of the Healyite group involved much more than mechanical expulsion of potential opponents: "In accounting for Healy's personal sway it is necessary to account for the loyalty he received from leading members of the group such as Tom Kemp and Cliff Slaughter (the party's theoreticians), Alex Mitchell (editor of *Workers Press*), and Mike and Tony Banda, the wealthy Ceylonese supporters of Healy. Without such support Healy could not have remained at the head of the organization for so long. . . . The support of this leadership group (which includes a number of well-known members of Equity, the actors' union) may, in part, be

attributable to Healy's personal charisma, but it is also likely to result from the conviction that the politics of the organization are worth defending. . . .⁸¹

Callaghan concluded that "the picture that emerges is of a group which believes itself to be *the* revolutionary party striving to preserve Marxism from adulteration . . . and the infiltration of 'bourgeois' and 'petty bourgeois' influences. Because of its conviction in its unique role and destiny to 'make' the socialist revolution, and because of its belief in the imminence of political and economic catastrophe, this group can tolerate no internal—or for that matter, external—opposition."⁸²

Finally, Callaghan has observed that "the theories which the WRP defends as the central elements of its Leninism-Trotskyism cannot be dismissed simply as simplifications of a 'true' Leninism-Trotskyism, though simplifications they may be. The point is that these simplifications are so tenaciously held and so durable because they accord with the basic thrust and spirit of the Bolshevism which dominated the early Comintern and which Trotsky sought to preserve. . . . In this rather limited though important respect, the WRP really does defend orthodox Trotskyism. Or rather it has petrified this doctrine and kept it from contamination with empirical reality. . . ."⁸³

The Healyites' 1985 Split

In the latter half of 1985 the long-standing "leadership group" of the WRP split wide open. Two factions emerged, each calling itself the Workers Revolutionary Party and each publishing its own versions of *News Line* and *Young Socialist*. In the beginning of the split, at least, the rank and file was more or less evenly divided between the two groups.

On the one hand was the WRP controlled by Mike Banda and Cliff Slaughter, composed of elements who had turned against Gerry Healy. On the other side was the WRP

loyal to Healy, with among its principal figures Vanessa and Colin Redgrave and Alex Mitchell, longtime editor of *News Line*.

The quarrel between the two groups originated at least as early as July 1, 1985, when Allison Jennings, for nineteen years secretary to Gerry Healy, wrote a letter to the Political Committee of the WRP accusing Healy of having sexually exploited twenty-six young members of the organization, who were listed by name, and asked the Political Committee to "deal with" the problem, terming it a "security risk" for the organization.⁸⁴

Sometime after this incident, according to Sean Matgamma, a leader of another British group claiming adherence to Trotskyism, "Healy . . . agreed to take a back seat or retire, no doubt under pressure, but apparently with the agreement of some who are now his supporters." But, Matgamma added, "the Political Committee bloc that had pushed for his retirement then began to break up. Two prominent WRP leaders, Mitchell and Torrance, seem to have changed sides, and perhaps others did too. The Political Committee reversed the decision that Healy would retire. A minority led by Banda revolted and appealed to the Central Committee, whose majority backed them."⁸⁵

On October 19, 1985, the Central Committee of the WRP voted to expel Gerry Healy from the organization by a vote of twenty-five to eleven. The charges against Healy, according to the Mike Banda version of *News Line* were "sexual abuse of female party members, physical violence against party members, and . . . unfounded accusations of involvement with the CIA against an international leader of the Trotskyist movement" later revealed to be David North of the Workers League of the United States.⁸⁶

The pro-Healy members of the Central Committee then called a conference which passed a resolution which "rejected" Healy's resignation and expelled Banda, Slaughter

ter, and their backers. That resolution labelled Healy "the outstanding leader of the world Trotskyist movement in the postwar period." The meeting also launched a campaign to raise £250,000 to relaunch a daily *News Line* by January 1986.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, Michael Banda, who had been Healy's closest associate for more than a quarter of a century, launched a series of charges against his old colleague. According to Sean Matgamma, "Banda has: 1. Denounced Healy's followers such as the Redgraves as people who have the attitude of religious cultists towards their 'guru' Healy. . . . 2. Denounced Healy for using systematic and routine violence and brutality against members of the organization. . . . 3. Denounced Healy for using pressure, intimidation and violence to coerce young women comrades into sexual activity with him. . . . 4. *Newsline* now denounces the Healy faction for having a morality of 'anything goes for the organization.' . . . 6. Banda describes Healy as 'a classic case of schizoid paranoia.' . . . 7. Banda denounces Healy's works on dialectical materialism, long the bible on which WRP members were trained, as 'an outrageous piece of charlatanism.' . . . Banda denounces Healy for justifying the execution of Communist Party members by the violent Baathist regime in Iraq. . . ."⁸⁸

Although the Banda group seized the WRP's property,⁸⁹ lawsuits on the subject were begun. According to one unfriendly American source "the party's assets" were "valued at 2.1 million U.S. dollars in property, cash, printing machinery, films and electronic equipment."⁹⁰

British Trotskyism since World War II: International Socialists, IMG, Militants, and Other Groups

Although the Healyites remained the most important Trotskyist group in Great Britain until the mid-1960s, their relative significance and absolute size declined subsequently. Several other major factions appeared, some as splits with the Healy tendency, others with different origins. At least two of these, the International Socialists and the Militant Tendency, put forward major points of dissidence with traditional Trotskyism.

International Socialists

The "State Capitalist" Position of the IS

Among the Trotskyist groups which entered the Labor Party in 1949 was what was first known as the Socialist Review Group headed by Tony Cliff (Palestinian immigrant whose original name was Ygael Gluckstein). As we have already noted, it was at that time particularly characterized by its belief that the Soviet Union and other Stalinist-controlled regimes were "state capitalist" in nature, rather than being "workers' states." Tony Cliff first put forth his elaborated "state capitalist" position in 1948 in *The Nature of Stalinist Russia*. This volume was reissued, with only very slight modifications, in subsequent years under different names. Its 1974 version was entitled *State Capitalism in Russia*.

Cliff argued that the Soviet bureaucracy is a new capitalist ruling class. He said that

"the Russian bureaucracy, 'owning' as it does the state and controlling the process of accumulation, is the personification of capital in its purest form. . . . The fact that the bureaucracy fulfills the tasks of the capitalist class, and by doing so transforms itself into a class, makes it the purest personification of this class. Although different from the capitalist class, it is at one and the same time the nearest to its historical essence. *The Russian bureaucracy as a partial negation of the traditional capitalist class is at the same time the truest personification of the historical mission of this class. . . . The most precise name for the Russian society is . . . Bureaucratic State Capitalism.*"¹

Cliff rejected Trotsky's categorization of the Soviet bureaucracy as a "caste":

It would be wrong to call the Stalinist bureaucracy a caste for the following reasons: while a class is a group of people who have a definite place in the process of production, a caste is a judicial-political group; the members of a caste can be members of different classes, or in one class there can be members of different castes; a caste is the outcome of the relative immobility of the economy—a rigid division of labor and an immobility of the productive forces—whereas the Stalinist bureaucracy was transformed into a ruling class on the crest of the *dynamism* of the economy.²

Cliff also opposed the "bureaucratic collectivism" description for the Soviet Union and other similar states put forward by Max Shachtman and his followers in the United States and elsewhere. The core of his critique of the Shachtman position was that

The essence of Shachtman's position is summed up in the statement that the rulers of Russia under Stalin were neither workers nor private owners of capital. What is decisive, according to the Marxist method, in defining the class nature of any society? As the history of all class

society is the history of the class struggle, it is clear that what does determine the place of any regime in the chain of historical development are these factors which determine the character of the class struggle in it. Now, the character, the methods, and the aims of the class struggle of the oppressed class are dependent on the nature of the oppressed class itself: the position it has in the process of production, the relation between its members in this process, and its relations to the owners of the means of production. These are *not* determined by the mode of the appropriation or mode of recruitment of the *ruling* class.³

. . . [T]he big difference between the mode of appropriation and recruitment of the Russian bureaucrats and that of the bourgeoisie, in itself, does not at all prove that Russia represents a non-capitalist society, a new class society of Bureaucratic Collectivism. To prove this, it is necessary to show that the *nature* of the ruled class—its conditions of life and struggle—is fundamentally different in Russia from what exists, even for Shachtman, in capitalism.⁴

Cliff claimed that state capitalism, as epitomized by the Stalinist regime, was one stage in the evolution from capitalism to socialism. He argued:

Seeing that state capitalism is the extreme theoretical limit which capitalism can reach, it necessarily is the furthest away from traditional capitalism. It is the negation of capitalism on the basis of capitalism itself. Similarly, seeing that a workers' state is the lowest stage of the new socialist society, it must necessarily have many features in common with state capitalism. What distinguishes between them categorically is the *fundamental*, the *essential* difference between the capitalist system and the socialist system. The comparison of state capitalism with traditional capitalism on the one hand,

and with a workers' state on the other, will show that state capitalism is a transition stage to socialism, this side of the socialist revolution, while a workers' state is a transition stage to socialism the other side of the socialist revolution.⁵

John Callaghan has argued that the position of Tony Cliff and his followers "contains very little that is specifically Trotskyist. The theory of permanent revolution, for example, is absent—has been trimmed to an allegiance to the 'theory of the impossibility of socialism in one country.'" However, Callaghan quotes Duncan Hallas's recollection that "the founders of the group saw themselves as mainstream Trotskyists, differing only on unimportant questions from the dominant group in the International, but belonging to the same basic tendency."⁶

Early Years of the International Socialists

Other Trotskyist groups maintain that the Cliff group's analysis led it to be "neutral" in the Korean War, when all other Trotskyist elements were supporting the North Koreans. In reply to this Ian Birchall has written that "in fact, the Korean War was not the issue at the heart of the split. Rather it was the shamelessly opportunist support for Tito's Yugoslavia by the rest of the Trotskyist movement from 1948 onwards that highlighted the principled differences." Furthermore, he argued, the other Trotskyist groups by "taking a more or less uncritical attitude to Yugoslavia, North Korea, or other Stalinist states" were "abandoning the very essence of Trotskyism, namely, independence of both Western imperialism and Stalinism."⁷

In September 1950 the Cliff group, which began to edit *Socialist Review*, held their "first recorded meeting." There were just thirty-three members of the group at the time, of whom nineteen were in the Labor League of Youth. The first run of their news-

paper was 350 copies.⁸ Birchall admitted that "the Socialist Review group was, throughout the fifties, a purely propaganda group; it was not able to make any meaningful intervention in the class struggle." He added that "all members were expected to be active in the Labour Party. Before the 1951 General Election a directive was issued stating: 'It is most necessary that our comrades become known to the working class in their local areas as the most energetic and anti-Tory Labour Party workers.'" ⁹

Birchall also noted that the group was not motivated by the "catastrophic perspective" of the Healyites: "[T]here was no expectation of imminent split, no hope of capturing the leadership of a section of the party." They foresaw no "impending crisis." Their most notable activity during the 1950s was running a member of the group, Geoff Carlsson, for the presidency of the Amalgamated Engineering Union. He received 5,615 votes against 57,127 for the victorious right-wing candidate and 19,799 for the one backed by the Communist Party.⁹

International Socialists in the 1960s

In the early 1960s the Socialist Review group grew significantly. It took an active part in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and launched a new periodical, *International Socialism*, in 1960. This journal "welcomed the unilateralist victory at Scarborough, but pointed out that the Party machine could easily reverse the decision unless it was concretely related to the industrial struggle."¹⁰

With the launching of the Labor Party's new youth organization, Young Socialists, the Cliff group, now known as the International Socialists (IS), threw themselves into this new field of activity. They began to publish a periodical, *Young Guard*, particularly addressed to the Young Socialists. When the Young Socialists, by then under control of the Socialist Labor League, withdrew from the Labor Party, the IS members

stayed with the newly reorganized Labor Party Young Socialists.

On the Young Socialists, Birchall has commented:

For us the experience in the Young Socialists had produced a qualitative advance. The group had grown numerically and by 1964 it had topped the two hundred mark. Even more important, the new recruits had played a leading role in what was, albeit briefly, a mass movement. They had rapidly acquired a degree of political sophistication, in some ways an excessive one . . . [However] Although the youth movement was at the center of the arena during this period, us never dropped its concern with the industrial struggle. More workers were being recruited to us, though they were being recruited as individuals on the basis of general politics rather than on the basis of an industrial strategy, and most of them were too young to have any decisive influence at their place of work. But for the future they provided the basis for a new industrial cadre."

The us had its principal industrial base in the ENV engineering firm in West London, where it had several of the shop stewards and was in 1966 able to establish its first factory branch. However, shortly afterwards, a dispute at the plant led to the dismissal of most of the us members working there. Nevertheless, the group was able to have some involvement in strikes of construction workers in London and textile-machinery workers in Stockport.¹¹

During this period of the early 1960s the International Socialists thought through their ideas more clearly. They rejected the notion that they were in fact the leaders of the working class and adopted a more realistic perspective. They reasserted the reality of the postwar economic upswing—thus rejecting the "catastrophe perspective"—attributing the economic prosperity to the permanent arms economy. They also

reasserted the notion that the transition to Socialism consists of the reality of the workers in power, hence rejecting the "Third Worldism" popular among many other radical groups, including some Trotskyists, and more specifically rejecting the validity of various types of "African Socialism," "Arab Socialism," and similar concepts.¹²

John Callaghan has noted that "in 1965 the International Socialism group withdrew from the Labor Party believing that the time was ripe (and the us was big enough) to work in the growing number of 'fragmented' struggles which were then developing. Having never had illusions about transforming the Labor Party or of splitting it, the group made the transition to its new role without internal schism and identified the growing number of strikes, tenants' disputes, and anti-racist campaigns as the arena for independent political work. . . ."¹³

By the end of 1967 the International Socialists' membership had increased to about 400, about double what it had been four years before.¹⁴ In that year and the next the us people took an active part in the work of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, and largely as a consequence of this activity, "us had grown dramatically in the course of 1968." By the end of the year it claimed more than 1,000 members and its monthly publication, *Labour Worker*, had been converted into a weekly, *Socialist Worker*, "with a vastly increased circulation." Birchall added that "A number of full-time workers had been employed, both for the paper and as regional organizers. The pace of growth had taken the members by surprise."¹⁵

Toward a Workers Party

The leaders of the us had come to the conclusion "that it was possible to embark on the process of building an independent revolutionary party." However, as Birchall noted, "A revolutionary party has to meet criteria

of size, class composition, program and capacity to intervene. IS in 1968 could not begin to satisfy the requirement on any count."¹⁶

The first effort to bring into existence such a revolutionary party was an invitation by IS "to all other revolutionary groups" for unification on the basis of: "Opposition to imperialism . . . opposition to racism in all its forms . . . opposition to state control of trade unions . . . workers control of society and industry as the only alternative to fascism." Only one small group, Workers Fight, responded to this appeal. Merger with it brought only internal bickering between the two groups, and in December 1971 each went its own way.¹⁷

With the failure of its unity proposal the IS began the work of forming an independent Trotskyist party outside of the Labor Party. Its first move was a reorganization of the group's own internal structure. Hitherto it had been loosely organized, with its national executive consisting of delegates from the various branches. The leadership proposed substituting for this "democratic centralism" an executive elected by a national conference and the acceptance of the notion that "branches must accept directives from the center, unless they fundamentally disagree with them, in which case they should try to accord with them while demanding an open debate on the matter."

Birchall has noted that these suggestions "caused the greatest internal upheaval IS had ever had. Internal documents proliferated and at least five factions came into existence. It took two stormy conferences (in September and December 1968) before a new, democratic centralist constitution could be agreed."¹⁸

There continued to be internal tensions largely resulting from the imposition of traditional Leninist democratic centralism on a group which had been "libertarian" in organizational terms. According to John Callaghan, in this internal struggle Tony Cliff and those associated with him in the IS lead-

ership relied on purely organizational maneuverings to silence the rebels. . . . By changing aspects of the IS internal structure Cliff preempted the attempt to challenge his policies. The national committee of forty was replaced by a central committee of nine which took over its role, while the national committee itself was relegated to an advisory function . . . the delegate system for conferences was gerrymandered so that districts replaced branches as the representational basis of the organization, insuring that an estimated oppositional minority of one-third to two-fifths of the membership was reduced to 15 percent of the 1975 conference delegates.¹⁹

Callaghan has quoted a comment of Duncan Hallas, who had formerly insisted on the priority of the "democratic" aspect of democratic centralism, as reflecting the post-1975 view of the IS leadership concerning the question:

The regime must at all times be as open and flexible as possible, consonant with preserving the revolutionary integrity of the party. The qualification is important. For unfavorable circumstances weaken the ties between the party and the layers of advanced workers, and so increase the problem of "factions, groups, and sects" which can be an obstacle to the growth of inner-party democracy as Trotsky understood it . . . it is an indispensable function of the leadership . . . to understand when to close to preserve the core of the organization from disintegration by unfavorable outside pressures—to emphasize centralism.²⁰

This tendency toward more orthodox Leninist democratic centralism led to several splits. Callaghan observes: "The IS-SWP internal battles intensified in the mid-1970s. In 1973 the right faction was expelled to form the Revolutionary Communist Group; in 1974 Roger Protz was removed as editor of *Socialist Workers*; further expulsions in

1975 resulted in the formation of the Workers' League and Workers' Power. At the same time the IS-SWP lost many individuals who had been part of its basic cadre."²¹

Another major problem facing the IS was the fact that the great majority of its members were middle-class students, not workers. Ian Birchall commented that "what now had to be begun was a systematic transformation of the organization. Very crudely, it is possible to see three main phases in this process: i. the membership had to be reorientated towards the industrial working class. . . . ii. the composition of the organization had to be changed by recruiting workers into the organization, iii. the workers in the organization had to take over the political leadership."²²

From International Socialists to SWP

The upsurge in trade union militancy in the early 1970s, which brought the fall of the Tory government of Edward Heath and the installation of another Labor Party administration, gave the International Socialists their chance. They took a leading role in organizing the Rank and File Organizing Committee, which led a series of unofficial strikes in various parts of the country. The IS held several national conferences in the early 1970s. It also ran some candidates in elections within important national unions, notably the Transport and General Workers Union. As a consequence, by 1974 the membership had risen to some 3,900.²³

During this period, the IS launched a number of "rank and file" newspapers. At one point, they had as many as fifteen of these publications catering to members of as many unions. By the early 1980s only six of these survived.²⁴

John Callaghan has sketched the orientation of the IS in this "rank and file" campaign. He wrote:

The IS initiative in launching a rank-and-file movement was intended to politicize

further these elementary sectional struggles (which were tending to overcome the traditional constraints of trade union action anyway) and make them one national movement which would form the basis of a new revolutionary party. The first national rank-and-file conference was called in March 1974 with 500 delegates representing 300 sponsoring bodies. An organizing committee was established consisting entirely of IS members. At the time the revolutionary optimism was high within IS. For the first time since the 1920s an alternative to parliamentarianism had been adumbrated which threatened both the trade union leadership and the Labor Party. . . . The IS tended to make the equation between economic and political militancy imagining that one followed the other in a straightforward fashion which would transform IS into a revolutionary party.²⁵

The downturn in trade union militancy during the Wilson-Callaghan Labor government of 1974-1979 presented the IS with serious problems. Its response to the general rightward trend of the labor movement was to launch the slogan "Steer Left," which many people within and outside the group regarded as "sectarian." However, supporters of the "Steer Left" line argued that what it signified was that in the face of the general rightward sentiment among workers, the IS should try to run against this tide.²⁶

Controversy over this new line resulted in the most serious split that the IS had ever faced. About 150 members of the organization quit or were expelled late in 1975 after a factional fight. Those excluded included Jim Higgins, John Palmer, Granville Williams, and Roger Plotz, who had been among the organization's principal leaders during the previous decade.²⁷

Meanwhile, in the face of declining labor militancy the IS turned much of its attention to other questions. They participated actively in moves to organize the unemployed,

they were largely responsible for organizing the Anti-Nazi League, which confronted street marches and demonstrations by various fascist-oriented groups, particularly the National Front. The group also became more involved in struggles for "women's liberation" and defense of the rights of homosexuals.²⁸ In 1982 the group's Central Committee formally abandoned the "rank and file" trade union orientation which it had maintained for about a decade.²⁹

The International Socialists had clearly defined themselves as a revolutionary group outside of the Labor Party. In January 1977 they reorganized as the Socialist Workers Party. They also had their first experience in running candidates in political elections. Late in 1976 they contested a byelection in Walsall North, where they got "1.6 percent of the poll [more than the Communist Party had got in that seat in October 1974], and some twenty-five recruits to the party."³⁰

However, "by early 1978 it was clear that the electoral strategy had, on balance, been unsuccessful." They had by then run candidates in eight byelections and "in all cases the vote was, as expected, small . . . moreover, experience showed that it was difficult to maintain those branches built around an election campaign." The swp decided not to run any candidates at all in the 1979 general election.³¹

As a consequence of their wide-ranging activities during the late 1970s, the swp had largely recovered the ground, at least in terms of membership, which it had lost as a consequence of the slowdown in industrial activity and the 1975-76 split in the organization. By 1980 it reported 4,100 members, of whom 36 percent were manual workers and 32 percent white-collar workers.³² Most other Trotskyist groups admitted in the early 1980s that the swp had the largest membership of any segment of British Trotskyism.

In a pamphlet on the history of the Labor Party, Duncan Hallas summed up the position of the swp in the early 1980s:

No socialist party worth a brass farthing can be built except by the most active *organized* involvement in working class struggles of all kinds and active propaganda to win the workers (and others) to socialism. That means building a different *kind* of party, a party rooted in the working classes and the unions and in all manner of grassroots activity. It means building a party that does *not* say, 'vote for me and we will solve your problems' but says 'you can only solve your problems by *fighting* for your interests and those of other working people,' a party that exists to coordinate and develop those struggles and direct them towards the seizure of power by the working class—and to hell with the 'constitution.' A party that is *internationalist*. That is what the Socialist Workers Party is all about.³³

The swp is the British affiliate of the International Socialist tendency in the world Trotskyist movement.

The Militant Tendency

Origins of the Militant Group

If by the early 1980s the swp was numerically the largest Trotskyist group in Great Britain, the Militant Tendency was certainly the most influential element in British Trotskyism. It was the lineal descendant of the segment of the membership of the postwar Revolutionary Communist Party under the leadership of Ted Grant, which had gone into the Labor Party in 1949. However, unlike most of the other "entrust" Trotskyist groups it had persisted in its attempt to penetrate the Labor Party and had even concluded that that was the only strategy appropriate to Trotskyism in a country such as Great Britain.³⁴

The Grant group had remained very small—as was true of most of the British Trotskyist factions—during the 1950s. For a

short period they had relations with Michel Pablo's International faction after the 1953 split in the Fourth International. This came about as a result of the placing in *Tribune* of an advertisement for a mimeographed magazine *Fourth International* being edited by a group of Cypriot supporters of Pablo in London.

Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson have explained what happened: "Sam Bornstein at that time not connected with any of the groups replied to the advertisement, and was contacted by Jacques Privert, whom he met with John Fairhead. Fairhead and Bornstein agreed to take over the day to day running of the duplicated *F. I.* Bornstein contacted Grant's group in London and arranged a meeting with them and Pablo. It was this loose amalgam of Grant's group, the Cypriots, some Ceylonese students and a small group of West Indians who had just broken with Healy that agreed to work together with Bornstein as managing editor of *F.I.*, later *Workers International Review*."³⁵

The Cypriot and Ceylonese elements, together with some British Trotskyists from the Left Fraction of the Revolutionary Socialist League of the 1940s, had constituted the Committee for the Regroupment of the British Section of the Fourth International; the faction headed by Ted Grant was the International Socialist Group. Then they joined forces, setting up a new Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL). At the 1957 congress of the Pabloite version of the Fourth International the RSL was officially recognized as the British section of that group.³⁶ The new Revolutionary Socialist League published two periodicals for a while, *Socialist Fight* and *Workers International Review*.³⁷

The Revolutionary Socialist League soon split, some of those who broke away forming the predecessor of the International Marxist Group.³⁸

The Grant group got its first chance for expansion with the reestablishment of a Labor Party youth group, Young Socialists, in

1960. Their members were very active in the organization, and when the Healyites took most of the Young Socialists out of the Labor Party in 1964, the Grant group remained with the Labor Party in the new Labor Party Young Socialists. They fought there to have the Labor Party leadership reduce the controls it exercised over the youth group. Meanwhile, the Grant group had launched a monthly newspaper, *Militant*. Henceforth they were known among themselves and in the general public as the Militant Tendency.³⁹

Expansion of the Militant Tendency

The Militant Tendency was able to take considerable advantage of the increasing discontent which arose within the Labor Party during the later years of the Labor Government of Harold Wilson (1964-70). They were active in the student upsurge of 1968-69, concentrating their work particularly on the Labor Party student organization, the National Association of Labor Students, and on the short-lived Revolutionary Socialist Youth Federation. They did not concentrate the bulk of their propaganda and organizational activities on the students during this period, as did some of the other radical groups. They argued that the students had no real social base, and that although they might make an important revolutionary contribution they could only do so as part of a movement basically made up of and led by workers.

In 1972 the Militant Tendency won control of the Labor Party Young Socialists (LPYS). Partly as a result of the fact that the Labor Party did not take the Militant Tendency very seriously at that time, being more worried about the International Marxist Group and the Healyites, the Labor Party officialdom did very little to try to prevent Militant control of the party's youth group. Later the Militants did encounter harassment and obstructionism such as the closing down of some local LPYS groups, reject-

tion of credentials of Militants at LPYS conventions or those of LPYS representatives at Labor Party annual conferences. In 1981, for instance, between twenty and thirty delegates were thus denied seats at the Labor Party Annual Conference.

The Militants in control of the LPYS went out of their way to try to avoid a direct confrontation with the Labor Party leadership. Thus, they accepted the practice that drafts of policy documents submitted to LPYS conferences should be drawn up by the Research Department of the Labor Party rather than by LPYS leaders. The purpose of the Militant Tendency was not to get thrown out of the Labor Party but rather to win over as many people within the party to their point of view as possible.⁴⁰

The degree of hegemony of the Militant Tendency over the Labor Party Young Socialists was shown in the LPYS 1979 conference, where its only opponents were two other small Trotskyist factions—Workers Action and Clause 4—and the Militant slate for the new executive committee received 200 votes against 20 votes each for the opposing groups. As a consequence of its control of the LPYS, the Militant Tendency from 1972 on had a member of the National Executive Committee of the Labor Party.⁴¹

The Militant Tendency was also able to make considerable headway in the local constituency organizations of the Labor Party. In part this success was attributable to the decline of those same constituency organizations during the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was characteristic for only a handful of the registered Labor Party members in any constituency group to attend its meetings.

As a consequence of their penetration of the local Labor Party groups, the Militant Tendency had appreciable representation at Labor Party annual conferences. For instance, they claimed that at the 1975 conference three-fourths of the Constituency Labor Party delegates voted for resolutions which were introduced by the Militant Ten-

dency, and that in 1976 a third of all of the speeches made were delivered by members of the Militant group.⁴²

The Militant Tendency was also successful in getting a number of its members adopted as Labor Party parliamentary candidates. In 1982 it was reported that there were at least seven such cases.⁴³

Militant influence in the Liverpool Labor Party gained particular public attention. Labor won control of the Liverpool city council in 1983, after eleven years of a Liberal Party administration. Of the fifty-one Labor Party council members, the *New York Times* reported that fifteen belonged to the Militant Tendency. The *Times* reporter, Jon Nordheimer, reported that although the Militant Tendency "has been largely disavowed by the national Labor leaders . . . the faction's influence here has been strengthened by less ideological members of the local party who agree that only a radical course of action can bring hope to the city."⁴⁴

During the 1970s and early 1980s the Militant Tendency was able to win some influence in the trade union movement. At the 1982 conference of the Civil and Public Service Association (CPSA), a member of the Militant Tendency was elected president and several others were elected to its executive. They also had control of the Bakers Union, which the Militant Tendency was largely responsible for organizing. The Militant Tendency in 1982 had members on the national executives of the Transport and General Workers Union, the Fire Brigades Union, the National Local Government Workers Union. In the National Union of Public Employees they had four or five appointed local officials in areas where they had a substantial membership base. They held many offices in locals of various unions.

The Militants were reportedly quite frank about their affiliation when running for union office. In unions where that was the custom, they usually drew up election manifestos which made it clear that their candi-

dates were members of the Militant Tendency.

By mid-1982 the Militant Tendency people claimed to be the main element in the Broad Left within and outside of the Labor Party. They had been able to capitalize on the drastic decline of and confusion within the Communist Party. For example, whereas a decade earlier the Communists had been the principal left-wing force within the powerful Amalgamated Engineering Union, by the early 1980s the Militant Tendency claimed to hold that position.

By mid-1982 the Militant Tendency reported having between 4,000 and 5,000 members. They claimed that their paper, *Militant*, had a paid circulation of some 30,000 copies, more than the *Tribune* or the Communist Party's daily newspaper, *Morning Star*.⁴⁵

At the time of the Malvinas (Falkland Islands) War in April-May 1982, the Militant Tendency issued the call "No Support for Junta—No Support for Tories." An editorial in the group's newspaper argued that Argentine President Galtieri had launched the invasion of the islands to divert popular attention from the failures of his regime. It argued that "given the class basis of the Argentine regime and the effect of the invasion on the islanders themselves, there is no hesitation in condemning the invasion that took place on April 2nd." But it also declared itself opposed to "the jingoism and chauvinism of the Tory press and the Thatcher government in Britain," and argued that "Labor must demand a general election in order that a Labor government can support and encourage workers' opposition in Argentina."⁴⁶

Labor Party Assaults on the Militant Tendency

In mid-1982 an effort was made by the National Committee of the Labor Party to carry out a purge of members of the Militant Tendency. The move to have the NEC take such action had begun as early as 1977, when the

second-ranking member of the Labor Party staff began producing reports on the Militant Tendency for the National Executive.⁴⁷ Finally, in June 1982 the National Executive Committee voted sixteen to ten to set up a "register of approved organizations" within the Party, at the same time deciding that the Militant Tendency could not qualify as such an organization. The Militant group was given three months to "list its aims, officers, employees, membership and accounts." Michael Foote, then leader of the Labor Party, approved the measure, calling the Militant Tendency "a secret conspiracy" which "has to be eliminated."⁴⁸ This position contrasted sharply with his opposition in previous decades to efforts to purge Trotskyists from the Labor Party.

A number of unions quickly went on record against this measure, which had to be approved by the Annual Conference of the party. So did a large number of constituency Labor parties.⁴⁹ A number of other groups operating within the Labor Party also announced that they would refuse to register as "approved organizations." These included Campaign for Labor Democracy, Labor Coordinating Committee, Labor Committee on Ireland, Labor Abortion Rights Campaign, and Socialist Organizer (the last also a Trotskyist group).⁵⁰

Although no blanket condemnation of the Militant Tendency was adopted at that time, it was reported that between 1983 and 1985 over thirty supporters of the Militant Tendency had been individually expelled from the Labor Party. At the 1985 Annual Conference Labor Party Leader Neil Kinnock denounced the "implausible resolutions . . . pickled into rigid dogma" which the Militant delegates had introduced at the conference. He also labelled the Militant Tendency "a maggot in the body of the Labor Party." After a few weeks, the National Executive Committee of the Labor Party launched an "investigation" of the Liverpool section of the party and of the city government it controlled—and which had par-

ticularly strongly resisted the Thatcher government's attempts to cut back on its social welfare programs—alleging “corruption, misuse of public funds, providing jobs for supporters, and intimidation.”⁵¹

Ideological Positions of the Militant Tendency

The ideological orientation of the Militant Tendency was consistent for over more than a quarter of a century. It centered on what John Callaghan has described as “economism.” Ted Grant and his supporters argued that world capitalism in general and British capitalism in particular were undergoing a long-run decline due to the falling rate of profit. Sooner or later this would result in a massive onslaught by the capitalist class and its government on the living standards of the British working class. Although the Militant Tendency leaders' description of the details of this process varied from time to time and was not infrequently contradictory, the basic nature of the British economic crisis continued to be the centerpiece of the doctrine of the Militant Tendency.⁵²

The group's political orientation was determined by this view of Britain's prospects. John Callaghan has noted that “Militant's general perspectives . . . have stayed remarkably constant since the late 1960s. In 1968 Grant envisaged that a new economic crisis would lead to a leftward swing in the unions and the Labor Party, and that the parliamentary wing of social democracy would split, with the right wing joining the Tories.”⁵³ It was in the expectation of that eventuality, of course, that the Militant Tendency was so steadfast in its continuing policy of entrism in the Labor Party.

Because of its concentration on working within the unions and the Labor Party the Militant Tendency did not get involved in “peripheral” issues. Callaghan has noted that “the Militant Tendency believes that the Anti-Nazi League, the women's move-

ment and the CND obstruct, rather than aid, the socialist cause.”⁵⁴

The Militant Tendency maintained an orthodox Trotskyist position on the question of the nature of the Soviet Union, that it and the other Stalinist regimes were “degenerated workers states.” However, on one other issue it disagreed with traditional Trotskyism: as a general principle, it opposed the establishment of separate revolutionary socialist parties, favoring instead that Trotskyists should work within traditional workers' parties. They opposed the ultimate establishment of a one-party state, in view of what had happened in the Soviet Union. They expressed confidence that once all means of production and distribution were nationalized there would be no danger of parties such as the Tories ever being able to convince the workers that capitalism should be reestablished. They favored the ultimate nationalization of all the press, with access to it being granted in proportion to the support any particular party had among the voters.⁵⁵

In the international field, the Militant Tendency maintained relations with other avowedly Trotskyist groups following a “deep entrism” policy. John Callaghan reported the founding in 1975 of an “entrism international” at a conference attended by forty-eight people from Britain, Ireland, Sweden, and Germany.⁵⁶ The Militant Tendency also maintained relations with left-wing elements in the youth groups of various European social democratic parties.⁵⁷

Despite their divergences from traditional Trotskyist positions, the Militant Tendency continued to regard themselves as Trotskyists. Their book and magazine sales service sold Trotsky's works extensively, their publications continued to cite Trotsky with certain frequency.

The Militant Tendency regarded the other British Trotskyist groups as “sects.” Thus Ted Grant wrote in one pamphlet that “the plague of small sects, largely as a result of splits in other sects, has developed as a con-

sequence of the failure of the larger sects, like the IMC, SWP and WRP to build and maintain mass revolutionary organizations according to their theories and ideas. . . . The sects all spread disillusion, cynicism and skepticism. As Marxism becomes an important force in the working class and gains support in the working class generally, the sects can do less damage than they have done in the past."⁵⁸

Internal Organization of the Militant Tendency

Because of its deep entrism policy and its desire to avoid getting expelled from the Labor Party, the Militant group inevitably had to function on a somewhat conspiratorial basis. John Callaghan has noted that "the Militant's mode of operation is a concomitant of its 'unofficial,' quasi-clandestine status. Contacts are made via newspaper sales, only when the contact proves himself reliable is he introduced to the Militant organization proper."

Callaghan added that "as with other far left organizations, the Militant group's leadership echelon is remarkably stable. These figures—Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe, Lynn Walsh, Keith Dickinson, Clare Doyle, Roger Silverman, Brian Ingham etc.—have between thirteen and twenty-seven years' activity as Trotskyists in the Labor Party. These are the names which appear in the list of twenty-five shareholders in Workers International Review Publications Ltd., the owner of Militant publications."

However, Callaghan noted that "it is unclear what the contribution of the ordinary supporter can be. . . . There is no evidence of discussion and debate or of the involvement of the rank and file. . . . The national meetings which Militant *does* hold appear to be organized more like rallies than conferences with the audience playing a relatively passive role."

Under these circumstances the Militant Tendency has been almost unique among

Trotskyist groups in having had few if any internal controversies or splits. Callaghan has noted that he "found no written evidence whatever of such fissures in the group's long history. . . ."⁵⁹

The International Marxist Group— Socialist League

Origins and Early Activity

The remote origins of the International Marxist Group were to be found in a number of members of the Nottingham and Midlands branch of the Communist Party, notably Ken Coates and Pat Jordan, who were expelled from the CPGB over the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. After short association with Gerry Healy's Socialist Labor League, they joined the Revolutionary Socialist League of Ted Grant. However, in 1961 these people, described by Bornstein and Richardson as "Pablo and Mandel loyalists," withdrew from the RSL to establish what they called the International Group. They returned to the RSL once again in 1964 on the urging of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Within the RSL, the former International Group members began to publish a periodical, *The Week*. This time their association with Ted Grant's group lasted for only about a year, when they withdrew to establish the International Marxist Group (IMG). At the 1965 Congress of the United Secretariat (USEC), the IMG was jointly recognized with the RSL as a sympathizing organization of USEC. When the Revolutionary Socialist League, which until then had had the status of the British section of USEC, took this move as an affront and broke off all relations with the United Secretariat, that left the IMG as the only British affiliate of USEC.⁶⁰

Tariq Ali wrote about the early years of the IMG that "the IMG was formally constituted in 1966; its early life was dominated by the Labor Party and its strategy premised on the emergence of a left current inside the

Labor Party which would raise the banners of revolt against the Wilson clique. This never took place despite the vicious and reactionary policies of the Wilson administration."⁶¹

The International Marxist Group received its first impetus for rapid growth in the student upsurge of 1967-68 and the campaign against the Vietnam War. It was largely responsible for organizing the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign.⁶² That movement reached its high point in a demonstration on October 27, 1968, in which 100,000 people participated. Two leaders of the vsc, Tariq Ali and Ernest Tate, presented a letter at 10 Downing Street addressed to Prime Minister Harold Wilson, which said, "Dear Harold, in the name of 75,000 workers and students, we demand that you stop supporting American imperialism and start supporting the NLF in Vietnam."⁶³

John Callaghan has noted that at least two things characterized the role of the IMG in the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. On the one hand, it fought successfully to keep it a "one issue" campaign. On the other, it insisted on raising as the Campaign's major slogan, "Victory for the National Liberation Front."⁶⁴

Subsequently, the IMG was to insist on an equally radical stance with regard to the situation in Northern Ireland. It adopted the slogan, "Victory for the IRA" and refused to condemn or even to criticize in any way the terrorist activities of the Irish Republican Army.⁶⁵

The success of the IMG in its student and antiwar activities resulted in a substantial increase in membership. Reporting to the IMG January 1969 Conference, National Secretary Pat Jordan said that the number of members had doubled within the previous year. Without any doubt most of the new recruits were young middle-class people with little base in the trade union movement or the Labor Party. This fact was underlined by the decisions and attitudes of that same January 1969 conference. Accord-

ing to *Intercontinental Press*, "The conference discussed the perspectives of the new student upsurge and the current situation in the Labour Party and the trade unions. The Labour parliamentary left was scored for its complete failure to project a militant alternative to the right-wing programs of the Wilson leadership. The delegates felt that this made the independent work of the IMG more necessary than ever. This was seen, however, as complementary to oppositional work inside the Labour party."⁶⁶

The IMG finally gave up entrism into the Labor Party, at least for the time being, late in 1969. In the following year, it established a youth group, the Spartacus League.⁶⁷

Titular leadership of the IMG was meanwhile largely assumed by Tariq Ali, who had joined early in 1968. He was successively editor of periodicals sympathetic to or controlled by the Group, first *Black Dwarf*, then *Red Mole*, and finally in 1977, *Socialist Challenge*.⁶⁸

At the time of the 1970 election, which resulted in the defeat of the Labor Government, there was a debate in the IMG as to whether or not it should support the Labor Party's candidates. Pat Jordan wrote an official statement in *Red Mole*, in reply to an earlier article by Robin Blackburn urging abstention, that the IMG supported Labor, but that "our role should be to raise the level of consciousness, to prepare people for the coming struggles and to fight any illusion that the election result will solve any problems." Jordan summed up the then current attitude of the IMG thus: "The Labour Party has been 'buried' many times and yet still exists as an obstacle in the building of a revolutionary party. It won't bleed to death—an executioner is needed. Only the working class, under revolutionary leadership, can destroy the Frankenstein's monster it created. This article is a contribution to the discussion the left is having as to just how to set about doing that."⁶⁹

In June 1972 the majority political resolution adopted by the IMG conference by a

vote of eighty-six for, nineteen against and twenty-three abstentions, proclaimed that "our main theoretical task was an analysis of the Labour Party and the struggle against economism." It did not indicate clearly whether this was to be done from within the Labor Party or from the outside. At another point the resolution stated that "the task of breaking the working class from social democratic politics is not a question of exposing the nature of the leadership of the Labour Party but of revealing the bankruptcy of the entire social democratic method of struggle."⁷⁰

In fact, the IMG had gained little ground either in the Labor Party or the trade unions. The only entrée of any significance they had had among the organized workers had been a campaign around the concept of "workers' control" in the middle 1960s, in which Ken Coates had been particularly active. After Coates split away from the IMG, it "lost its influence over the militants it had done much to mobilize in the workers' control conferences and since 1968—when the conferences were formalized as the Institute for Workers' Control—the IMG has played no part in that movement."⁷¹

In 1977–78 the IMG carried on a campaign to try to unify the various Trotskyist groups, except the Militant Tendency. It particularly sought to make overtures to the Socialist Workers Party.⁷² However, there proved to be insufficient basis of agreement for bringing together the various Trotskyist factions. Only two small groups, Big Flame and the Marxist Workers Group, agreed to engage in some joint political activities with the IMG.⁷³

By the time of its 1978 conference the IMG had somewhat modified its anti-Labor Party position. The political resolution adopted at that time called for "the building of a left-wing class struggle in the mass organizations. This above all means building oppositions within the trade unions. . . . Where appropriate it also involves the work of supporters of our politics inside the Labor

Party." However, the same resolution noted that work within the Labor Party "has a lower priority" than that in "the trade unions, the antiracist and antifascist struggle, the women's movement, the students, and taking steps towards the creation of a youth organization." It was reported that 18 percent of the delegates were industrial workers, 56 percent were white-collar workers, and 79 percent of the delegates were trade unionists, compared with 55 percent of the general membership of the IMG.⁷⁴

In the 1979 general election the IMG organized what it called the "Socialist Unity" campaign. It put up ten candidates who "everywhere garnered only a handful of votes." A supporter of working exclusively within the Labor Party claimed that "because their political ideas came packaged with a central proposal to break labour movement ranks and vote for an obviously hopeless candidate, it is unlikely that even their propaganda work did much good. . . ."⁷⁵

In general the IMG tended to take positions similar to those of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States on such issues as race relations. Thus, it supported the idea of a separate Black Movement in Britain, being the only Trotskyist group in the country having that position.

In the controversy within the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in the 1970s over the issue of support of guerrilla warfare, the IMG sided with the European groups against the position of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. As a consequence a split developed in 1975–76, with the formation of the League for Socialist Action, which supported the line of the American SWP. The League dissolved in 1981 with the end of that controversy and its members returned to the International Marxist Group.⁷⁶

Another small split in the IMG occurred as a result of the USEC controversy of the 1970s. A little group which sympathized with the Third Tendency in USEC, which had appeared at the Tenth World Congress

in 1974, broke away sometime later to form the International-Communist League (I-CL). It associated with the Necessary International Initiative (NI), a kind of "opposition" outside of the USEC, for some time thereafter.⁷⁷ We have no indication of how long the I-CL continued to exist.

With the development of a further factional struggle within the United Secretariat as a result of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party's move away from Trotskyism in the early 1980s, the majority of the IMG-SL sided with the majority of the USEC. There was a minority in the British group which supported the position of the Barnes leadership in the United States swp.⁷⁸

Early in 1983 the IMG decided to return to an entrant policy and have its members join the Labor Party and concentrate on work within it. The formal announcement of this decision was made in the Group's newspaper, *Socialist Challenge*, on February 25, 1983. Under the heading "Final issue," it wrote that "with next week's issue, No. 283, *Socialist Challenge* is ceasing publication. But don't worry! *Socialist Challenge* supporters have decided to turn all their energies towards supporting a new paper being launched in the Labour Party and the trade unions called *Socialist Action*. Many of the writers who now contribute to *Socialist Challenge* will be writing for the new paper."⁷⁹

The first issue of *Socialist Action* carried greetings from, among others, Tony Benn, leader of the Labor Party left wing, Ken Livingstone, the Leader of the Greater London Council, several Labor Left members of parliament, including longtime Labor Left leader Ernie Roberts.⁸⁰ It also announced the setting up of "Socialists for a Labor Victory," within which the ex-IMG people were working.⁸¹

Back within the Labor Party the International Marxist Group changed its name to Socialist League.⁸² Charles van Gelderen, a leader of the group, summarized their perspectives in deciding once more to try to

penetrate the Labor Party: "Briefly, it was decided to make a turn toward the Labor Party where a left current was developing (initially associated with Benn but it has now gone beyond him—or rather, he has lagged behind the developments). Although we have retained the perspective of a turn to industry in the present situation, with Britain in industrial decline, there is no immediate perspective of fruitful work in that field. . . ."⁸³

A pamphlet published by *Socialist Action* soon after the group returned to the Labor Party sketched its perspectives for work within Labor: "To carry through the fight for a revolutionary workers' government it is necessary to construct a mass revolutionary workers' party. The Labor Party has always been dominated by a bureaucracy even during its most left-wing periods. . . . The restructuring of the labor movement, and the emergence of a mass anti-capitalist party, will therefore almost certainly take the route of a split in the Labor Party. Such a split will be the political responsibility of the right-wing leaders. Whether socialists will win a majority in the Labor Party cannot be predicted in advance. But the battle for a socialist program must be waged inside the mass organizations of the working class. . . ."⁸⁴

Nature of IMG-SL Organization

John Callaghan has noted two characteristics of the IMG-SL as an organization. These were the very high degree of activity it required of its members, and its democratic internal life.

Speaking of the period of the 1970s Callaghan noted that "the IMG activists became preoccupied with campaigns on Ireland, racism, feminism, Vietnam, the organization of school students, etc., aimed at immigrants, women, youth and the unemployed. By 1971 IMG had accumulated over 30 front organizations, approximately one for every eleven members of the organization." He

noted sixteen different kinds of activity that an IMG member would be expected to engage in, both within the IMG and in its various peripheral groups. He noted that "such activism leaves little time for anything else. . . ."85

In commenting on the internal organization of the IMG, Callaghan has noted that "if the IMG was in any way sounder and more stable than the rest of the far left, it was in respect of the organization's internal regime. For throughout its existence, the IMG has avoided the kind of internal disruption and authoritarianism which we have encountered elsewhere on the Trotskyist left. From its origins in the mid-1960s to the end of the seventies no factions were expelled from the IMG."86

Callaghan added, concerning the rights of individual IMG members within the organization, that "clearly these formal rights are extensive. Furthermore, the IMG's political practice—which is relatively free from instances of authoritarianism—shows that these rights are real; that in other words, the organization's political culture is genuinely democratic."87

By the mid-1980s the IMG-SL remained predominantly middle class in social composition. Its influence in the trade union movement was minimal in absolute terms as well as in comparison with some of the other British Trotskyist groups. An unfriendly source has observed that "at present they are happily ensconced in the Labor Party where they continue their battle against their old bogies—workerism and economism. . . ."88

The Thornett Group

The fifth significant Trotskyist element in Great Britain by the early 1980s was that associated with the newspaper *Socialist Organiser*. It was sometimes referred to as the Thornett Group, after its best-known trade union figure, Alan Thornett.

The remote origins of this faction go back

to a split in the Socialist Labor League in 1963, led by Sean Matgamna. Matgamna had started his political career in the Young Communist League, leaving it to join the SL. Immediately after quitting the Socialist Labor League, he and his followers first joined the Militant Group "and left after writing an 85-page document criticizing them."89

The Matgamna group developed close relations with the Irish Workers Group, a seedbed of various radical elements in Ireland.⁹⁰ After spending some time in the International Socialists, the Matgamna group was expelled from the IS in 1971, and established Workers Fight. In 1975 Workers Fight merged with Workers Power (WP), another element recently expelled from the IS, to form the International Communist League. A year later most of the former members of Workers Power withdrew again to reform WP, charging the Matgamna group with being "centrists" and "seasoned opportunists."⁹¹

It was the International Communist League which was principally responsible for launching a new periodical—and group—late in 1978. According to M. North, one of the leaders of the Socialist Organiser group, "the paper 'Socialist Organiser' first appeared in late 1978. . . . The title began as the 'Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.' Although Trotskyists were active in organizing and building the SCLV, it was not a purely Trotskyist campaign, as it set out to organize all the 'serious' left within the Labour Party."⁹²

The ICL leaders were apparently impressed by the progress of the Left within the Labor Party after the party's 1979 defeat and felt that the way was opened for a new kind of campaign within the Labor Party. In one of its last issues, the ICL periodical *Workers Action* had spelled this out, saying that changes of the Labor Party structure made possible the "transformation of the Labour Party into a real instrument of the working class." It added that the 1979 Annual Con-

ference of the party "demonstrates that transforming the political wing of the labor movement is a possibility, and thus that it is possible to raise the transitional demand for a workers government in Britain, where in the initial stages such a government would inevitably have the Labour Party as its major or only component."⁹³

Sean Matgamna has explained the strategy of the Socialist Organiser group. He noted that it was established "at a national conference in July 1978 of 200 activists from a broad spectrum of the Labour Party and trade union Left," and that "our immediate goal was to organize a parallel election campaign within the official Labour campaign. . . . The leaflets on Ireland, racism, women, and the unions explained the political positions in our 'Where We Stand.' As well as warning against the danger of the return of the Tories, our campaign criticised the Labour government and argued for a commitment to fight for *Socialist Organiser's* politics whoever won the election." Matgamna concluded that "We tried to give socialists who had good reason to be disgusted with the Wilson-Callaghan-Healey government a perspective of struggle against them *within* the vitally necessary effort to mobilize the labour movement to keep the ultra-reactionary Tories out."⁹⁴

The *Socialist Organiser* group succeeded in getting the support of a number of non-Trotskyist left-wing Laborites. Thus, in its immediate postelection issue *Socialist Organiser* had short articles by successful Labor Party candidates Ernie Roberts, Ron Leighton, and Stuart Holland, as well as by several defeated nominees including Ted Knight and Ken Livingstone (who two years later was to be elected head of the Greater London metropolitan council).⁹⁵

M. North wrote that "after the victory of the Conservative Party in the 1979 elections, the work of the SCLV came to an end, but the Socialist Organiser group continued around the country. This system has been maintained since that time. . . . The aim of

the alliance is still to organize the revolutionary left, including those who would not call themselves Trotskyists."⁹⁶

In July 1981 the Socialist Organiser group was joined by the Workers Socialist League. This was the group which had been formed (at first under the name Workers Revolutionary League) by Alan Thornett and his supporters when they had been thrown out of the Healyite Workers Revolutionary Party late in 1974. In the intervening years it had been strongly attacked by the WRP, and WRP star Vanessa Redgrave had gone so far as to sue Thornett for money she had allegedly "lent and advanced"⁹⁷ The group's relations with some of the other Trotskyist groups, particularly the IMG, had been more friendly.

The Thornett group remained of significance within British Trotskyism because of its continuing influence among some union groups, particularly in the auto industry. It also was of some importance because it had organized an international grouping, the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee (TILC),⁹⁸ which although not one of the larger Fourth International factions did give it contacts with the world Trotskyist movement which some of the other British groups no longer had. Therefore, its adherence to Socialist Organiser represented an addition of some consequence.

At the time the Workers Socialist League joined Socialist Organiser, it apparently merged within so with the International Communist League. It gave up its own paper, *Socialist Press*, "and so continued as the only paper of the enlarged organization."⁹⁹ It was agreed that a new theoretical journal would be established to complement the more topical material contained in *Socialist Organiser*.¹⁰⁰

The Socialist Organiser group was thus in some ways the most "deep entrust" of all the British Trotskyite factions. Although there remained a frankly Trotskyist organized element within it, in its public presentations it seemed by 1982 to have moved farther

than any of the other larger groups from taking a specifically Trotskyist line of analysis or appeal.

The Smaller Trotskyist Groups

In addition to the five major elements in British Trotskyism, there continued to exist in the early 1980s several smaller groups with much less influence or membership than the WRP, Socialist Workers Party, Militants, IMG-SL, and Socialist Organiser. Some note should be taken of these.

After late 1975 there existed a small Spartacist element in Great Britain. In that year the London Spartacist Group was established in the capital. Then in February 1978 some twenty-four members of the "Trotskyist Faction" of Alan Thornett's Workers Socialist League withdrew from the WSL, and soon afterward joined forces with the London Spartacist Group to establish the Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B), "as a sympathizing organization of the international Spartacist tendency." It claimed "close on 50 members and a presence both in London and the Midlands."¹⁰¹ There is no indication that the SL/B expanded appreciably after its formation. It generally came to the attention of other Trotskyist groups not so much by its visibility at public demonstrations, or in the trade union movement, as by the presence of Spartacist hecklers at the meetings of those other Trotskyist factions.¹⁰²

The Spartacists published a monthly periodical which was first called *Spartacist Britain* but in 1984 was changed to *Workers Hammer*. They were very active in 1984-85 in support of the long coal miners' strike. In February 1985 they published a special strike supplement of their newspaper which called for railroaders, truck drivers, and dockers to strike in sympathy with the miners.¹⁰³

Most of the other fringe Trotskyist groups in Britain had few if any overseas contacts. An exception was the Workers Power Group, originating in a small split in the

International Socialists in 1975, which published a monthly newspaper, *Workers Power*. Its Irish "fraternal organization" was the Irish Workers Group.¹⁰⁴

Of somewhat more significance was the Revolutionary Communist Party [RCP]. It had its origins in the Revolutionary Opposition within the International Socialists, which was expelled from the IS in 1973.¹⁰⁵ These dissidents first formed the Revolutionary Communist Group, which itself split with the establishment of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, which ultimately became the RCP.¹⁰⁶ What remained of the Revolutionary Communist Group seems to have disappeared.

The RCP published a monthly "review," *The Next Step*. The May 1982 issue indicated the matters of particular interest to the RCP. A note reported that "for the past two years, the next step has held major conferences in September. The first, attended by more than 200 people, examined various aspects of imperialism around the world. Last year's, twice as big, concentrated on the problems facing the working class in Europe. This year's conference will have a wider focus, taking in developments in the world economy, the labour movement in Britain and abroad, questions of women's oppression and militarism and pacifism."¹⁰⁷ The RCP tended to pay more attention to Britain's racial problems than did most of the other Trotskyist groups.

The RCP carried the "rank and file" approach to work in trade unions to an extreme. Its publication's issue of December 1981 wrote that "there is no salvation in trades unionism," and added that "Trade unions organise workers along sectional, industrial and craft lines. Trade unions reflect the divisions (sectional, sexual, racial) which capitalism imposes on the labour movement. The unity of our class can only be achieved around objectives which relate, not to a particular section, but to the interests of the proletariat as a whole."¹⁰⁸

When, after 1971, the International Com-

mittee of the Fourth International split between a group led by the Healyites on the one hand, and one led by the Lambert group of France on the other, the Lambertists for some time did not have any representation in Britain. In 1979 such a fraction was formed, the Socialist Labor Group. It consisted principally of people who at different times and for different reasons had broken with Gerry Healy. It was one of the smaller elements in British Trotskyism.¹⁰⁹

Another small but persistent faction was the Chartist group, established in 1970 by Al Richardson, who broke away from the International Marxist Group over the issue of its abandonment of entrism in the Labor party. It was made up of a dozen or more young people in their teens and early twenties.¹¹⁰ A dozen years later, the Chartist group was still publishing its periodical, *Chartist*, which on its masthead reported that it was "published five times a year by the Chartist Collective, which has supporters in the following areas: Bolton, Brighton, Cambridge, Derby, Leeds, London, Oxford, Liverpool, Preston, Stoke and Stockport. *Chartist* is also sponsored by Clause Four who have three subscribers on the Editorial Collective" (EC).¹¹¹

Another very small group was that founded in the early 1960s by the followers of the Argentine leader J. Posadas, the Revolutionary Workers Party (Trotskyist). It had its headquarters in London, and published a periodical entitled *Red Flag*.¹¹² The Revolutionary Workers Party (Trotskyist) was reported in the early 1980s to be still in existence and still publishing its periodical. They were working within the Labor Party. One unfriendly observer credited them with about a dozen members.¹¹³

Conclusion

British Trotskyism is one of the oldest branches of the movement. By the mid 1980s it was also one of the most influential,

in spite of being divided into five major factions and several minor ones.

Several peculiar factors have characterized British Trotskyism. One of these has been the fact that the two largest and most important groups are to some degree heretical—the Socialist Workers Party, rejecting the categorization of the Stalinist regimes as workers' states, and the Militant Tendency repudiating the basic Fourth International concept of organizing (sooner or later) an independent revolutionary party outside both the Second and Third International affiliates.

A second peculiarity of British Trotskyism has been the fact that throughout its half century of history it has been faced with the quandary of how to deal with the Labor Party, the organization which the great majority of the country's workers have regarded as "their" party. During all of this period the many successive Trotskyist factions have veered from "entrism" into the Labor Party to "principled" opposition to such a maneuver.

Neither of these strategies has been obviously successful. Entrism has always involved the dangers of watering down the Trotskyist program and of being absorbed into Social Democracy and ceasing to be Trotskyist at all. On the other hand, refusal to participate in the Labor Party has involved the risk of more or less complete isolation from the very workers whom the Trotskyists were trying to win over to their cause.

Trotskyism in Greece

During the first years of the history of international Trotskyism one of the largest national sections of the movement was in Greece. But as happened in a number of other countries, internal dissidence and quarrels of the local leadership with Trotsky led by the end of the 1930s to the loss to the movement of most of those in Greece who had originally been attracted to it. World War II brought a further decimation of Greek Trotskyism at the hands of both the fascist invaders of Greece and of the Communist would-be "liberators" of the country. Although Greek Trotskyism revived modestly after World War II, it remained a tiny movement and suffered a series of internecine struggles and splits, in part as a reflection of the schisms taking place generally within the ranks of International Trotskyism.

The Archeiomarxists

One of the first groups to respond to Leon Trotsky's effort to rally the scattered Left Opposition forces in various countries to a new international movement was the Archeiomarxist Organization of Greece. This was a substantial group which at the time it joined the International Left Opposition was a serious rival of the Communist Party for control of the far left in Greece.

The origins of the Archeiomarxists go back at least as far as 1919, when Francisco Tsoulatis established the Union of Communism, a "secret group" within the Socialist Labor Party, which later became the Greek Communist Party. The Union of Communism was dissolved early in 1921, but later in that year some of those who had led and belonged to it began to publish a periodical, *Archives of Marxism*.

Professor James Dertouzos has noted with

regard to the group which put out this publication that "the basic philosophy . . . was enunciated in its slogan 'first education, then action.' That is, the communist movement must first prepare leadership and cadres along the lines suggested by Marx and Lenin as a preliminary to revolutionary activity. Tsoulatis was not prepared to organize a formal party until the educational process was completed. . . . Accordingly, the early activities of the Archeiomarxists were limited to the formation of conspiratorial groups the existence of each of which was kept from others. The purpose of these groups was indoctrination in Marxist-Leninist theory."¹

In 1924, after the expulsion of its leaders from the Communist Party, the group around *Archives of Marxism* emerged as a more formally organized political group or party under the name Archeiomarxist Organization. By this time the principal leader of the organization was Demetrious Yotopoulos, better known within the international Trotskyist movement by his pseudonym Witte. Born in 1901, Yotopoulos was a chemist by profession.²

In June 1930 the Archeiomarxist Organization applied for admission to the International Left Opposition (ILO), which had been formally established a few weeks before. In October of that year the Archeiomarxist Organization held a national conference at which, among other things, it resolved to change its name to Bolshevik-Leninist Organization of Greece³ [although it continued to be referred to in both its own and International Left Opposition documents as the Archeiomarxist Organization].

Meanwhile, Trotsky had arranged to have two representatives of the ILO visit Greece and to confer with the Archeiomarxist leaders. Subsequent to this visit, Trotsky wrote a letter (in the name of the International Secretariat) addressed "To the Bolshevik-Leninist Organization of Greece [Archieiomarxists [sic]]." In this letter, Trotsky sought to clarify his attitude towards certain

positions taken by the Archeiomarxists in their October 1930 conference.

Among other things, the Archeiomarxists had decided to function as a political party, separate from the Communist Party. On this point Trotsky wrote them that "in no case are we ready to surrender to the Stalinists the banner of the Communist International, its traditions, and its proletarian core. We are fighting for the regeneration of the Third International and not for the creation of a fourth. . . . This does not, however, exclude the possibility in one country or another where the official party is extremely weak that the Opposition will have to assume, partially or totally, the functions of an independent political party (leadership of the trade unions and strikes, organization of demonstrations, nomination of candidates)."

Trotsky went on to say that he did not know enough about the Greek situation to know whether those conditions prevailed there. However, he added, "Even while acting as a party you must consider yourself as a section of the Third International, regarding the official party as a faction, and proposing to it unity of action in relation to the masses. A principled statement on your part on this question would be extremely desirable."⁴

Trotsky went on to warn the Archeiomarxists to expect some dissidence and some defections when they set about functioning as a party. But he added that "by infusing its ranks with more homogeneity and its activity with a broader political character, your organization will be able to replace one-hundredfold all possible individual desertions."

He also had words of advice for the Archeiomarxists concerning their relations with the other Greek organization which was sympathetic to the ILO, the Spartakos Group. He said that "it is difficult for us to judge whether unification is possible at the present moment. At any rate the possibility or the impossibility of unification can only become manifest in practice, that is, if you

seek united action in the form of an agreement on each political question. . . . In other words, we suggest a policy of the united front under these circumstances and at the present moment."⁵

In 1931 the Archeiomarxist Organization was recognized as the official Greek section of the International Left Opposition. At that time it reportedly had 2,000 members, being the largest ILO affiliate. In the following year, Demetrious Yotopoulos became a member of the International Secretariat, residing in Berlin, and then after the triumph of the Nazis, when the headquarters of the IS was transferred to Paris, he moved there with it.⁶

In June 1932 Leon Trotsky had an extensive conversation with several leaders of the Archeiomarxist Organization, who went to Turkey to see him. He sent to all the sections of the ILO a resumé of that discussion. From that resumé one is able to glean considerable information about the status and activities of Greek Trotskyism in the early 1930s.

Trotsky's discussion with his Greek followers indicated that the Archeiomarxists claimed about 1,600 members. They were active in the trade union movement, working in both the Communist Party-controlled United General Confederation of Labor and in its reformist rival, although having more influence in the former. In Athens they controlled the textile workers, cement workers, pretzel makers, and blacksmiths unions in the Stalinists' confederation, although they had been kept entirely out of the top leadership of that group by the Stalinists. They also controlled the cobblers, construction workers, carpenters, and barbers unions in Athens which were affiliated with the reformist confederation. In addition, they had thirty-two "fractions" functioning in those Athens unions which they did not control. In Salonika the Archeiomarxists led six of the ILO unions as well as the unemployed workers movement.⁷

The Archeiomarxists were also active

among the peasants. A recent party conference had put forward demands for cancellation of the debts of the poor peasants, and had drawn up a series of specific demands for wine, tobacco, and olive oil farmers. They were about to start a periodical appealing particularly to the peasants.⁸

The discussion disclosed that both the Archeiomarxists and Trotsky felt that there existed a "prerevolutionary" situation in Greece in 1932. With that belief the Archeiomarxists were actively pushing the formation of "workers congresses" composed of representatives of various political tendencies, which would put forward basically economic demands in the beginning but would hopefully work toward a revolutionary general strike.⁹

The Archeiomarxists had also had some electoral activity with somewhat disappointing results. In 1931 municipal elections in Salonika, where they had thought that they would outdraw the official Communist Party, they had received only 590 votes, compared with 2,300 for the Stalinists. They attributed this largely to the official Communists' ability to get support among the less militant workers and to the fact that the official party had around it the aura of the Bolshevik Revolution.¹⁰

The discussions of the Archeiomarxist leaders with Trotsky revealed certain differences of opinion between him and them. The most notable subject of such disagreement was the Archeiomarxist attitude toward "the Macedonian Question," that is, the right of Macedonia to autonomy or independence. The Archeiomarxists argued that for practical purposes there did not exist within Greece any such separate entity as Macedonia, since the overwhelming majority of the population there was Greek, to a large degree people who had come from Turkey in the early 1920s when Greece and Turkey had exchanged ethnic Greeks for ethnic Turks. Trotsky, on the other hand, argued that his Greek followers ought to take the position that, although they were not advocating separation of Macedonia

from Greece, if the people there wanted that, they should be willing to support the demand.¹¹

Separation of the Archeiomarxists from Trotskyism

In 1934 the majority of the Archeiomarxists withdrew from the international Trotskyist movement. They did not split over such issues as the Archeiomarxist leaders had discussed with Leon Trotsky in 1932, but rather over questions of internal politics within the international movement, in which Trotsky and the principal Archeiomarxist leader Demetrious Yotopoulos (Witte) took different and ultimately irreconcilable positions.

The disagreements of Yotopoulos with Trotsky appear to have centered particularly on the French Turn, that is, Trotsky's instructions to his French followers to enter the Socialist Party to operate as a faction there. There was an element within the French League, centering on the Jewish (Yiddish-speaking) element in Paris, which strongly opposed the French Turn, and which had within the International Secretariat the support of Yotopoulos in their position. In December 1933 that dissident element withdrew from the French League to form the Union Communiste, and to begin publication of a periodical, *L'Internationale*. The French group soon disappeared.

Long before the emergence of the Union Communiste Yotopoulos and Trotsky had begun to quarrel more or less openly. In a letter to the IS, dated October 8, 1933, Trotsky wrote that he had earlier communicated with Yotopoulos (Witte) to try "to restrain Comrade Witte from further movements on the path he is travelling. . . . I recalled to Comrade Witte that his splitting conspiracy in the Paris League would inevitably have an international repercussion and would reflect badly particularly on the Greek section."

Trotsky added that "the manner of his advance will make it quite obvious to the

overwhelming majority of the sections, who have carried on the struggle against Landau, Mill, Well and others, that it is a reproduction of the struggle of these people, only in a worse form. . . ."

Trotsky predicted in this letter that the struggle, if pursued, would result in Witte's attempt to have the Greek section confront the rest of the international organization. That, Trotsky added, "will inevitably lead, by the very logic of the situation, to the disintegration of the Greek section and its transformation into a national section of Witte's."¹²

In that same month, October 1933, Yotopoulos abandoned his position in the International Secretariat and returned to Greece to rally the Archeiomarxist Organization, which then boasted some 2,000 members and was the largest section of the international movement, behind himself and the positions which he had taken. As a consequence, on April 5, 1934, Trotsky wrote a letter "To All Members of the Greek Section of the International Communist League (Bolshevik-Leninists)." In this document he alleged that "Comrade Witte, starting with small and secondary questions, has set himself sharply in opposition to our leadership and to all our most important sections."¹³

Trotsky rejected the assertion of the majority of the Central Committee of the Greek section that "the struggle concerns organization principles." He argued that organizational problems by themselves were not sufficient to justify any split, and claimed that the Greek leadership was demanding a kind of "anarchic" leadership of the international organization, but was imposing an arbitrary rule within its own group. He suggested the holding of a new congress of the party with delegates chosen by proportional representation, at which whatever differences of principles there were could be debated and decisions democratically arrived at. Finally, he reminded the Greek section of its obligation to adhere to international discipline.¹⁴

Although there was a faction, including

Political Bureau member George Vitsoris, which opposed Yotopoulos, the majority backed him. As a consequence, the Archeiomarxists abandoned the international Trotskyist movement.¹⁵ Subsequently, the Archeiomarxist Organization became more or less associated with the International Right Opposition and then with the so-called London Bureau. It came to be viewed by at least some of the Right Oppositionists in other countries as their counterpart in Greece.¹⁶ It was represented at the Revolutionary Socialist Congress in Paris in February 1938, where the remnants of the International Right Opposition and the London Bureau organized the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity.¹⁷

The Archeiomarxists survived the dictatorship of General Metaxas, who seized power in 1936, as well as World War II. Michel Raptis insisted in 1982 that "during the second Greek civil war (1947-49) what remained of the Archeiomarxists joined the Greek Right. Today the Archeiomarxists no longer exist."¹⁸

The Reorganization of Greek Trotskyism

With the abandonment of the international Trotskyist movement by the Archeiomarxists it became necessary to establish a new affiliate in Greece. This proved a difficult task. There were three small groups remaining in Greece which proclaimed their loyalty to International Trotskyism. The oldest and most important of these was the Spartakos Group, founded in 1928 by Pantelis Pouliopoulos, former secretary general of the Greek Communist Party, upon his expulsion from the Greek CP. With the establishment of the International Left Opposition in 1930 the Spartakos Group announced its adherence to the ILO.¹⁹ The ILO recognized the substantially larger Archeiomarxist Organization as its Greek section for which it was reproached by the Spartakos Group.²⁰ It was reported to Trotsky by the Archeio-

marxists in 1932 that the Spartakos Group had about seventy-five members.²¹

The second element proclaiming its adherence to International Trotskyism after 1934 had come into existence as the result of an early split among the Archeiomarxists. That schism had taken place sometime before Trotsky's talk with the Archeiomarxist leaders in the spring of 1932. Referred to by Trotsky as "the factionists," they called themselves the Unitary Group and the Leninist Opposition. They consisted mainly of students and their leader was Michel Raptis.²²

Michel Raptis has noted that the Internationalist Communist League was established as a new Greek section of the movement in 1936.²³ This would seem to be the result of the merger of the Spartakos Group and the Unitary Group. However, according to Pierre Naville's report to the Founding Congress of the Fourth International there was in 1938 a second Greek affiliate of the International, the Internationalist Communist Union. Both the League and the Union were reported by Naville to be "regularly affiliated organizations" of the International.²⁴

The Internationalist Communist Union would appear to have consisted of those who had broken away from the Archeiomarxist Organization at the time the Archeiomarxists abandoned International Trotskyism. That element was led by Georges Vitsoris, a Politburo member who was a comedian by profession and had met Trotsky in Prinkipo and later again in France,²⁵ and by Karliaftis Loukas (also known by his party name as Kostas Kastritis).²⁶

Both of the Greek affiliates were tiny organizations. Naville credited the movement with having only about 100 members in Greece at the time of the establishment of the Fourth International.²⁷

The Founding Congress of the Fourth International adopted a special "Resolution on Greece." It declared that the unification of the two Greek affiliates "is required by the fact that the differences which presently

separate the two groups . . . do not justify the continuation of the separation." Such unification should take place "on the basis of acceptance of the Transition Program of the Fourth International and of its statutes," and the new group should take the name Revolutionary Socialist Organization (Greek Section of the Fourth International). It ordered the establishment of a provisional joint leadership, the establishment of a joint commission among exiles to aid in the unification process inside Greece, and the publication of a periodical to be distributed within the country. No such unity was achieved among the Greek Trotskyists. Only after World War II was a united Trotskyist group finally established in Greece.²⁸

The Greek Trotskyists were represented at the Founding Congress of the Fourth International by Michel Raptis, as a leader of the Internationalist Communist League.²⁹ He had gone into exile in France because of the persecutions of the Metaxas dictatorship, and was to live most of the rest of his life in France. In the documents of the founding congress, Raptis was referred to as Seros, and later was to be famous as Michel Pablo.³⁰

Raptis took an active part in the proceedings of the Founding Congress, although he was still a very young man. In the debate on the Program of the new international he argued that it did not pay enough attention to the peasantry and its struggle against debt and governmental exploitation.³¹ In the discussion of the situation in the USSR and the need for a "political revolution" there, Raptis argued that "we cannot stop the existence of a Soviet party, even a worker-bourgeois party."³² In connection with the resolution on the coming war he argued strongly against any appeal to workers' patriotism.³³ There is no special indication that Raptis spoke on the Greek Resolution.³⁴

Trotskyists During World War II and the Greek Civil War

The Greek Trotskyists suffered heavily during World War II and immediately after-

ward. During the Second World War they were victimized first by the Metaxas regime and then by the German and Italian invaders. At the same time, they were persecuted during the world conflict and in the civil war which followed by the Stalinists.

The most significant Trotskyist figure to fall victim to the Metaxas regime and then to the invaders was Pantelis Pouliopoulos, the leader of the Spartakos Group. He was arrested by the Metaxas regime in 1939 and fell into the hands of the Italians when they invaded Greece. In June 1943 Pouliopoulos was brought before a firing squad. It is recounted that, knowing Italian, he harangued the soldiers, appealing to them as proletarians and antifascists, whereupon the firing squad refused to shoot him; their officers finally carried out the task.³⁵

The Greek Trotskyists were active in the underground and among other things published a periodical, *The Proletarian*. It took what was by then the traditional Trotskyist line with regard to the Second World War, arguing that the participation of the Soviet Union in the conflict did not change the interimperialist nature of the war. It insisted that "the Anglo-Americans wish to return state power to the Greek bourgeoisie. The exploited will only change one yoke for another."³⁶

Although the Greek Trotskyists suffered at the hands of the Metaxas dictatorship and the Italian and German invaders, their most merciless persecutors were the Stalinists. Even while the Nazi-Fascist forces still occupied Greece, this persecution began. The Trotskyists in the Agrinion region formed their own unit of EAM (National Liberation Front), which on a national level was controlled by the Stalinists. After this group was organized its leaders were summoned by Aris Veloukhiotis, the head of the ELAS (Popular Army of National Liberation), the military arm of EAM, to his headquarters at Agraphia, ostensibly "to coordinate activities." When the twenty Trotskyists involved arrived they were immediately shot by the ELAS forces.³⁷

The real martyrdom of the Greek Trotskyists took place during the civil war which began at the end of 1944 and continued until Stalin's break with the Titoist regime in Yugoslavia. During this period EAM and ELAS tried to win control of the country from the government of King George II, who was supported first by the British and then by the Americans.

René Dazy has provided many details of the murders of Trotskyists during the period by OPLA, the secret arm of ELAS in charge of executing (or murdering) its real or alleged enemies. Even before the outbreak of the civil war OPLA had begun to kidnap Trotskyists or suspected Trotskyists. When members of the families of those who had disappeared appealed to Someritis, the president of the Greek Section of the League for the Rights of Men, he intervened with Acting Communist Party Secretary General Georges Siantos. Dazy has reported that "Siantos swore to the great gods that he knew nothing about it, that it is impossible that the OPLA could be responsible for such kidnappings. It could only be the action of provocateurs or uncontrolled elements. Investigations would be made, he promised. On December 4 the civil war began. There was no further news about the disappeared Trotskyists."³⁸

The Trotskyists who were murdered—sometimes after being tortured and even dismembered—included a wide variety of people—among them, government functionaries, office workers, students, teachers, workers, peasants. One of the most notable victims was Georges Constantinidis, a lawyer who had defended many of those arrested during the Nazi-Fascist occupation. He was one of those most brutally tortured before being murdered, because, as Dazy has commented, "he also had committed the crime of apostasy: member of the Political Bureau of the CPC, he had joined Trotskyism."³⁹

A 1946 report to the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party by Barziotas, one of the members of its Political Bureau,

said that 600 Trotskyists had been executed by OPLA. René Dazy has commented that "the figure is manifestly exaggerated."⁴⁰ Dazy is certainly correct, since there almost certainly were not that many Trotskyists in all of Greece at the time—and at least some survived.

Rodolphe Prager has gathered the names of those Trotskyists known to have died at the hands of the Metaxas dictatorship, the German and Italian invaders, and the Stalinists. He lists four executed by the dictatorship, fifteen killed by the Germans and Italians, and thirty-four murdered by the Stalinists, including one member of the Trotskyists' Central Committee.⁴¹

The Greek Trotskyists emerged from the Second World War divided into four different groups: ΕΔΚΕ (Internationalist Workers Party of Greece), ΔΕΚΕ (Internationalist Revolutionary Party of Greece), Peripheral Independent Organization of Macedonia, and a group which had broken away from the Socialist Party. In September 1945 the European Secretariat of the Fourth International decided to try to bring about unification of these factions into a single party. They sent Sherry Mangan (Terence Phelan) and Michel Pablo to Greece for this purpose. Mangan travelled ostensibly as a journalist (being on the staff of *Time-Life-Fortune*) and Pablo went along as Mangan's "secretary." They succeeded in organizing a unification congress which met clandestinely in a mountain village in July 1946, in the presence of Pablo and established the Internationalist Communist Party.⁴²

The International Communist Party During and After the Papadopoulos Dictatorship

The seizure of power by the Greek military under leadership of Colonel Georges Papadopoulos on April 21, 1967, was a severe blow to the Greek Trotskyists. Not only did it drive them—along with all other civilian political groups—deeply underground but it

also provoked a major split in the ranks of the Internationalist Communist Party.

In an interview in 1972 Theologos Psaradelles, one of the principal leaders of the Internationalist Communist Party, indicated the cause of the split which occurred after the coup. "In the wake of the coup, the Greek section of the Fourth International suffered a major split, with the majority of its members following the spontaneist-bomber line, which was expressed in the Democratic Resistance Committees. These groups included all political tendencies, Stalinists, rightist groups, and monarchists . . . because of the type of organization they adopted, the young leaders who had left the Greek section soon found themselves in prison and a new beginning had to be made from scratch."⁴³

Those remaining in the Trotskyist ranks made very clear their opposition to individual terrorism as a weapon to fight the colonels' clique. The July 1968 issue of their journal carried an article noting that "despite our sympathy for all terrorist fighters as heroic and tragic victims of the dictatorship, we categorically rejected the method of individual terror for strictly political reasons. Individual terrorism substitutes the individual, or a narrow circle, and heroic vengeance against a person for the masses and the class struggle."⁴⁴

Refusal to resort to terrorism did not protect the Trotskyists from persecution by the military regime. It was reported in October 1970 that there were more than 100 Greek Trotskyists then in prison, many of them having been given long terms including life sentences.⁴⁵

The Trotskyists were particularly active among the students. Theologos Psaradelles reported in 1972 that "it must be acknowledged that the students have been the first to be reached by the propaganda work of the Greek Trotskyists. This is for the good and sufficient reason that because of their higher educational level the students who participated in the mass mobilizations preceding

the military coup, in particular in July 1965, were better able to understand the irrevocable failure of the traditional organizations of the left."⁴⁶

The Trotskyists published an illegal mimeographed monthly periodical, *Ergatike Pale* (*Workers Struggle*), more or less regularly throughout the existence of the dictatorship.⁴⁷ When the pressure of the regime relaxed somewhat with the beginning of the 1970s, the Trotskyists developed a much wider publication effort. In addition to a printed magazine which appeared every six weeks and was said by Psaradelles to have "served as a center of regroupment for a whole series of groups that arose in the previous period," they also were able to get into print a number of books. These included works by Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Pierre Frank, and Ernest Mandel. The magazine carried considerable material from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.⁴⁸

The colonels' dictatorship fell on July 23, 1974, as a consequence of the Greek military's unsuccessful effort to overthrow the government of Archbishop Makarios in Cyprus, which precipitated Turkish invasion of that island. As a consequence open civilian political activity was revived, and to some degree the Trotskyists of the Internationalist Communist Party were able to take advantage of that fact.

On August 10, 1974 the first legal issue of *Ergatike Pale* appeared, as a four-page weekly paper. A week later the size of the publication was substantially increased.⁴⁹ They also sought to mobilize such following as they had in the labor movement by establishing the Vanguard Organizing Committee. The first proclamation of this group appealed to the workers to form local Vanguard Organizing Committees "in every category, in every city, and in every branch of industry." It explained that "these groups must serve as provisional leaderships that can impel and direct the struggle to drive out the opportunists appointed by the junta,

the labor skates who for years collected big salaries for their betrayals and whose sole mission was to send congratulatory telegrams to the murderers of our fellow workers." The proclamation set forth a seven-point program for reorganizing the labor movement and presenting demands to the new government and the employers.⁵⁰

The Trotskyists of the Internationalist Communist Party also participated in the first general election held after the end of the dictatorship. They were unable to get authorization to run their own candidates, so they endorsed the lists of the Enomene Aristera, the coalition organized by the Communists.⁵¹

The Internationalist Communists continued to suffer some persecution in the wake of the fall of the dictatorship. The Karamanlis government arrested leaders of the group on various occasions. The editor of the legal edition of *Ergatike Pale*, Giannis Pelekis, who had been a political prisoner under the dictatorship, was twice arrested in the months immediately succeeding its overthrow.⁵² In 1976 he was arrested once again, charged with "moral responsibility" for a large demonstration on May 25. He and thirteen other defendants, including several other Trotskyists, were later acquitted by an Athens court.⁵³

The Trotskyists strongly opposed a new constitution issued by the Karamanlis government. They decried its limitations on political freedom, and its "guaranteeing capitalist property and the bourgeois institutions of the church, the family, the educational system. . . ."⁵⁴

In September 1977 the Internationalist Communist Party merged "with another Trotskyist group"⁵⁵ to form the ΟΚΔΕ—Organization of International Communists of Greece, which continued to be affiliated with the United Secretariat. The publication of the ΟΚΔΕ was *To Odhophragma* [*The Barricade*], which like its predecessor continued to be edited by Giannis Pelekis.

In October 1977 Pelekis was arrested once

again, charged with "moral responsibility for incidents in which members of anarchist groups clashed with the police during protests against the deaths of three imprisoned leaders of the Red Army Faction in West Germany." According to a statement of the Political Bureau of the OKDE, "The charge is based on an article written for the tenth anniversary of Che Guevara's death, on passages from the resolutions of the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International published in *Marxistike Dheltio*, the theoretical magazine of the Greek section early in 1975, and on the leaflet issued by our organization on the day of Baader's assassination. . . ."

The OKDE organized a campaign to free Pelekis and four fellow prisoners. They were joined in this effort by "three other far-left organizations—the OSE [Revolutionary Socialist Organization], KOM [Fighting Communist Organization], and the OPA [Group for a Proletarian Left]. . . ."⁵⁶

After a new conference of the OKDE in September 1975 the organization changed the name of its organ back to *Ergatike Pale*. In its first issue the new periodical commented favorably on municipal election victories by a coalition of Andreas Papan-dreou's Pan Hellenic Socialist Movement and the "exterior" faction of the Communists.⁵⁷

The OKDE was active in the 1980 campaign against Greek participation in NATO. When one demonstration was broken up by the police with the resulting death of at least two of the demonstrators, the OKDE issued a statement to the effect that "the brutal police attack and its tragic consequences shows the real face of the government, a government of austerity and blatant terrorism."⁵⁸

Other Greek Trotskyist Groups

In addition to the United Secretariat, several other factions of International Trotskyism have had affiliates in Greece in recent de-

cares. Among these has been a group of followers of Michel Raptis (Pablo), who broke with the United Secretariat in 1965. It has been known as For Socialism.⁵⁹ For some time the group worked within the Pan Hellenic Socialist Movement of Andreas Papan-dreou, and Michel Raptis was an adviser of Papan-dreou. Relations between For Socialism and the Pan Hellenic Socialists were reportedly broken off after the latter's victory in the 1982 elections.⁶⁰ The For Socialism group published a periodical of the same name in Athens.⁶¹

The "Pabloists" in Greece were active in the Protagoras Political-Cultural Circle in Athens. This group organized a meeting of support for Polish Solidarity in Athens in January 1982, in protest against the martial law regime of General Jaruzelski. About 5,000 people were present at the meeting, attended not only by the Pabloites but also by Socialists and members of the "interior" faction of the Communist Party of Greece.

Michel Raptis himself was a speaker at this meeting. He appealed to "Athens of the workers, Athens of the critical intelligentsia, Athens of clear reasoning and generous heart, remember the long struggles for liberty and democracy, the free democracy in the hands of the citizens. Arise to honor the Poland of Solidarity and carry your message to the whole nation, that today and tomorrow, and in the long future which will be necessary, we will continue our active solidarity with our brothers of Poland."⁶²

Other factions of International Trotskyism have also had Greek sections. When certain elements of the old International Committee of the Fourth International refused to join in the so-called "reunification" which established the United Secretariat in 1963, the reorganized International Committee had in its ranks a Greek affiliate. M. Bastos represented this group at the Third Conference of the International Committee in April 1966.⁶³

When the International Committee split in the early 1970s both the "Lambertist"

and "Healyite" factions had Greek affiliates. The Greek section of the Lambertist Comité d'Organisation pour la Reconstruction de la Quatrième Internationale (CORQI) was represented at a conference of the group in Paris in mid-1980. The Moreno faction which broke away from the United Secretariat in 1979-80 had two Greek sections: the Socialist League, which published a newspaper *Socialist Revolution*, and the Socialist Group, which put out its own paper, *The Socialist*. Greek organizations affiliated with both the Lambertist and Moreno groups were represented at the "World Conference of the Party Committee" organized by the two international factions in October 1979.⁶⁴ The Healyite International Committee also continued to have a Greek affiliate.⁶⁵

One of the earliest Greek Trotskyist groups to be organized outside of the United Secretariat was that affiliated with the Posadas version of the Fourth International. Right after the Eighth World Congress of that group it was announced that the Revolutionary Communist Party (Trotskyist) had been established as the Greek section of the Posadas Fourth International, having been organized only a few days after the colonels' coup in 1967. It was publishing a periodical, *Kommunistike Pali* (*Communist Struggle*).

The statement of the International Secretariat of the Posadas group announcing the establishment of the Greek section attributed the organization of the Greek group directly to J. Posadas. It said in typical Posadas-like prose:

The most lively and most eloquent expressions of the role of the individual in history, when this expresses the needs which are not individual but collective and historical, when an individual armed with theoretical and political assurance, based on the scientific and Marxist concept is capable of concentrating and centralizing all the force, all the potency of the International; capable of concentrat-

ing in a conscious and scientific way the objective empirical and unconscious necessities of history. The role of Comrade J. Posadas in the constitution of our Greek section, is not the force of an individual, but all the power and the historical assurance of the IV International when this work is concentrating its preoccupation and its activities among the conscious centers which in united front with the revolutionary tendencies of the masses, will decide the future course of history in Europe and in all the world: the sections of the International.⁶⁶

There is no information available about how long the Greek section of the Posadas Fourth International continued to exist.

It may well be that there have been other factions within Greek Trotskyism of which we are not aware. One unfriendly source wrote in 1979 that "The 'extreme Left,' the Trotskyists, are in the worst moment of their existence. There are thirteen groups. Two are in the Pasok [the Greek Socialist Party of Andreas Papandreou]; the other eleven are formed by less than 200 'friends.'"

...⁶⁷

Healyite International Committee

Once the break between the faction of the International Committee of the Fourth International led by Gerry Healy and the British Socialist Labor League, and that led by Pierre Lambert and the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste had been consummated, the Healyite group went forward with plans for what they called the Fourth World Conference of the International Committee. It met between April 1-15, 1972, presumably in London although the official report on the session did not specify where it was held. That report noted that the Fourth Conference was attended by "delegates from eight countries . . . some of them travelling many thousands of miles," but did not specify which national organizations were represented.¹

This meeting adopted a long manifesto. The gist of the document was that the measures of President Richard Nixon on August 15, 1971, devaluing the U.S. dollar and increasing United States protectionism, had ushered in a massive and definitive crisis of international capitalism. This crisis was characterized by trade war among the large capitalist countries and drives of the capitalists to destroy the labor movement. However, the antilabor offensive would be met by increasing militancy on the part of the organized workers, leading in country after country to revolutionary situations. It emphasized that both Social Democratic and Stalinist parties would seek to short-circuit the trend toward revolution in both the highly industrialized and the "colonial and semi-colonial" capitalist countries, as would all "revisionist" Trotskyists. The burden of leading the revolution therefore fell on the International Committee and its national sections.²

The International Committee continued after 1971 to be centered on the Socialist Labor League, renamed the Workers Revolutionary Party, of Great Britain. It also had affiliates in the United States (Workers League), Canada, Ireland, Greece, and Australia. With the reemergence of radical politics in Spain in the last years of Franco, an affiliate of the International Committee was established there. These national sections remained small, and after the decline of the SLL in the early 1970s there was no country in which the International Committee affiliate was the largest of the groups proclaiming loyalty to Trotskyism.

The International Committee remained very decidedly a "Healyite" organization until 1985. Gerry Healy did not hesitate to intervene in the internal affairs of the national sections, as he did in the case of the Workers League of the United States, decreeing removal of the founder and longtime head of the organization, Tim Wohlforth.

The International Committee was also "Healyite" in the sense that it and its national sections strongly endorsed and participated in various campaigns launched by Gerry Healy. In the dozen or more years following the Fourth Congress of the IC it engaged in at least three major propaganda crusades. During the first year or so after the Fourth Congress particular stress was laid on the importance of "Marxist philosophy" as the underpinning of any revolutionary party. Healy published a pamphlet through the International Committee, *In Defense of Marxism*, which was a broad attack not only on his former French colleagues of the OCI but also on George Novack, the principal philosophical spokesman for the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.³

The second campaign of the International Committee involved a violent attack on Joseph Hansen (and subsequently on George Novack, when he came to Hansen's defense), alleging that Hansen had had contacts with both the Soviet secret police and the FBI when he had been a bodyguard of

Trotskyism in Honduras

Leon Trotsky in Mexico. This onslaught brought negative reactions from virtually all other factions of International Trotskyism, who rallied to Joseph Hansen's defense.

The third campaign of the Healyite International Committee was an extensive defense of the regime of Colonel Muammar Qadafi of Libya. Once again, all sections of the International Committee joined in this somewhat peculiar interpretation of the theory of "permanent revolution."

By the early 1980s the International Committee was largely isolated from the other currents of International Trotskyism. Its idiosyncratic positions on various issues, and its violent attacks on all other groups claiming adherence to the Trotskyist tradition had put it largely outside the mainstream of the world movement.

Late in 1985 a major split developed in the Workers Revolutionary Party of Great Britain, with the majority led by Hastings Banda and Cliff Slaughter expelling Gerry Healy from the party, and he in turn expelling them. This schism undoubtedly also split the International Committee. We do not at the time of writing have sufficient details on the international repercussions of the WRP split to comment on them.

Trotskyism did not get established in the Central American republic of Honduras until the early 1980s. By 1982 there existed a small Trotskyist organization called *Independencia Obrera*, the title also of the newspaper which it published. The organization was part of the Morenoite tendency of International Trotskyism, that is, the International Workers League [Fourth International].¹ Little is known of its history.

Hungarian Trotskyism

A Hungarian branch of International Trotskyism has existed on two occasions. For a very short period in the early 1930s there was a Hungarian Trotskyist group which apparently had members both in the exile community in Paris and inside the country. Then after the events of 1956, a Trotskyist group was organized again among Hungarian exiles, principally in Paris, which became the center of one of the smaller schismatic groups of International Trotskyism.

After the short-lived Hungarian Communist regime headed by Béla Kun in 1919, the succeeding government of Admiral Horthy made it necessary for all Communists to function underground or in exile. This was true of the Left and Right Oppositionists as well as of the Stalinists.

The principal figure in the Hungarian exile group of the early 1930s was a young man named Szilvaczi (first name unknown) who had been a member of the Hungarian Communist Party. He had led in the formation of the Left Opposition group and represented it at the first meeting of the International Left Opposition in Paris in April 1930.¹ However, the group does not seem to have been represented at any further international meetings of the movement. According to Rodolphe Prager, it only existed between 1930 and 1932.²

During its short life, the Hungarian Trotskyist movement of the 1930s had some contacts with Trotsky, who seemed to take at least some interest in putting it on the right track both ideologically and organizationally. There are records of at least two exchanges of correspondence between Trotsky and his Hungarian supporters.

Trotsky's first letter was addressed to the Hungarian exiles. After a denunciation of "Béla Kunism" he gave particular encour-

agement to the leadership role of the exiles: "It is perfectly natural if communists in emigration take on themselves the initiative for offering theoretical help and political solidarity to the revolutionists struggling inside Hungary."³ Trotsky added that "it is working-class 'emigres' precisely, educated by the Left Opposition, i.e. the Bolshevik-Leninists, who can constitute the best cadres of a renascent Hungarian communist party. The organ to be set up by you has its task to link up the advanced Hungarian workers scattered in different countries, not only in Europe but also in America. To link them up not in order to tear them out of the class struggle in those countries to which they have gone; on the contrary, to call on them to participate in the struggle . . . to educate and temper themselves in the spirit of proletarian internationalism."⁴

A second letter was directed by Trotsky to his Hungarian comrades, this time, apparently, to those inside Hungary. In this letter, dated September 17, 1930, he started by commenting on the fact they had reported to him that the anti-Stalinist opposition within the Hungarian Communist Party had not yet sorted itself out into Right Opposition, Left Opposition (Trotskyists), and "a few ultralefts."⁵

Trotsky told his followers that "to draw a line between ourselves and such elements is absolutely necessary. This can only be done on the basis of principled issues both on the Hungarian level and internationally. It will be absolutely necessary for you to acquaint yourselves more closely with the discussion which has gone on among us Bolshevik-Leninists, on the one hand, and among the rights and ultralefts, on the other."

Trotsky urged maintenance of the linkage between the workers in Hungary whom he was addressing and the exiles. He commented that "Hungarian comrades in emigration will presumably translate the most important documents of this discussion for you, or at least excerpts from the docu-

ments, so that you be fully abreast of these matters and can take an active part in all of the work of the International Opposition."⁶

Trotsky told his Hungarian followers that they were correct in operating independently from the Communist Party but should do so as a fraction, that there was no need for either a second Hungarian Communist Party or a Fourth International. He then "clarified" their theoretical positions, denying that Russia had passed directly from feudalism to socialism; rather he said that "it was not feudal but capitalist relations that played the dominant role. . . ." Also, he denied that the New Economic Policy had inevitably to lead back to capitalism in the Soviet Union, arguing that "everything depends on the relation of forces," and that "state capitalism" could only be brought to the USSR by a civil war.⁷

By the later 1930s the Hungarian Trotskyist group had apparently ceased to exist. It was not reported as an organization either affiliated with the International Secretariat or "in contact" with the IS at the Founding Congress of the Fourth International in September 1938.

Hungarian Trotskyism was revived, at least in exile, after the Revolution of 1956. Balasz Nagy (better known as Varga), who had been secretary of the Petótfki Circle in Budapest, was one of those who fled to France after the defeat of the Revolution. There he was converted to Trotskyism, largely through the efforts of Pierre Broué, one of the principal leaders of the Lambertist tendency in French Trotskyism. Varga then set about to try to establish Trotskyist groups among the Hungarians and other East European exiles in France. His League of Revolutionary Socialists of Hungary became an affiliate of the Healy-Lambert International Committee of the Fourth International in the 1960s.⁸

At the time of the split between the French and British affiliates of the International Committee in 1971-72, the League of Revolutionary Socialists of Hungary sided

with the French.⁹ Ultimately Varga split with his French comrades and took the lead in establishing what he simply called The Fourth International.¹⁰

There is no evidence available indicating that the League of Revolutionary Socialists of Hungary had actually been able to establish an organization inside of Hungary.

Trotskyism in Iceland

It is not clear whether there was a Trotskyist movement in Iceland before the 1970s. The United States Socialist Workers Party's weekly newspaper *Militant* published an article in 1954 about a supposed split in the Icelandic affiliate of the Fourth International between supporters of Michel Pablo and the backers of the International Committee of the Fourth International.¹ A similar report in the French journal *La Verité* claimed that 90 percent of the Icelandic Trotskyists had stayed with the faction which formed the International Committee.² However, these articles gave no indication of the name of the supposed Icelandic affiliate of the International, or any other details concerning the organization. There is reason to believe that these articles were merely a ploy in the bitter conflict then waging between the SWP and Lambertists on the one hand, and the elements supporting Pablo on the other, rather than being evidence of the actual existence of a Trotskyist movement in Iceland at that time.

The antecedents of recent Icelandic Trotskyism go back to the youth organization of the Stalinist party, which was known between 1939 and 1968 as the Socialist Party. When the Socialist Party merged with some other groups in 1968 to form the Peoples Alliance, which Erlingur Hansson describes as "more like the Danish SF party than a Stalinist party," its youth group, Fylkingin (the Youth League) refused to dissolve and continued to be active as a separate organization.

In 1970, a congress of the Fylkingin changed its name to Fylkingin-barattusamtök sosialista (Fylkingin—Militant Socialist Organization). It also dropped the age limit of thirty-five "and declared the necessity and aim of Fylkingin to found a new revolu-

tionary party in Iceland." In 1972 it began to publish a monthly paper, *Neisti* (*The Spark*), which had a circulation of about 1,000. During this period Hansson described the party as "a centrist group, with considerable public activity and growing internal discussion."

This discussion intensified after what the party, then with a membership of about fifty, considered a major defeat in the parliamentary elections of 1974. It ran candidates in two of the country's eight constituencies, and received only 200 votes, or 0.2 percent of the total vote. This compared with 121 votes for a Maoist group, 20,924 votes for the Peoples Alliance, and 10,345 votes for the Social Democrats. Some of the Fylkingin members had hoped to receive as many as 1,000 votes.

Controversy within the party centered principally on a Maoist faction and a small Trotskyist element. The latter in the beginning consisted of two students who had joined the Swedish section of the United Secretariat while studying at Uppsala University in 1973. Hansson notes: "In the winter 1974-75 there were Icelandic Trotskyists who were all members of the Fylkingin studying in Sweden, Denmark, and West Germany. They joined the sections of the Fourth International (United Secretariat) in their countries, but at the same time they organized as a secret faction of Fylkingin along with several members who were living in Iceland. In August-September 1975 they gained a majority . . . at a congress of Fylkingin after a big pre-congress debate. After that Fylkingin became openly a Trotskyist organization." The Maoists withdrew to establish their own group.

In March 1976 the Fylkingin at another congress officially applied for membership in the United Secretariat. They were soon recognized as a sympathizing organization of usoc.³

The Trotskyists gained some publicity in late 1976 when they demanded in the country's central labor organization that mem-

bers of its executive be chosen by a system of proportional representation. This brought down on them a strong attack by Edhvarðh Sigurdhsson, a trade union leader of the Peoples Alliance, the party which had originally been Stalinist.⁴

In 1978 the Fylkingin ran candidates in the capital, Reykjavik, the largest of the country's eight constituencies. They received 184 votes, 0.4 percent of the total in the capital, and 0.2 percent of the total votes cast in the country. They did not offer candidates in the 1983 election. In municipal elections and in parliamentary constituencies in which it did not offer nominees Fylkingin urged its supporters to vote for those of the Peoples Alliance.

In January 1984 Fylkingin decided to conduct entrism work within the Peoples Alliance. According to Hansson, "It continues to function as a Leninist-type organization, as a sympathizing section of the Fourth International, and publishes *Neisti* (*The Spark*) eight times a year. Other activities are trade union work and solidarity work with the revolution in Central America."⁵

As a result of adoption of an entrism policy the Icelandic Trotskyists changed the name of their group to Militant Socialist Organization [Barattusamtök Socialistá] at a congress in the summer of 1984. In explaining their new tactic, one of their leaders said: "The leaders of the Peoples Alliance do not want to organize the party very rigorously. In fact one of their leaders stated the aim of the organizational changes that preceded our entrance to 'make the party an umbrella organization.' Some of the leaders have studied the organization of the French Socialist Party [Mitterrand's party], and say they are applying the methods which are used there."⁶

The leaders of the Peoples Alliance welcomed the entry of the Trotskyists into their ranks. They even offered to allow them to come in as an organized group, but the Trotskyists decided to join "as individuals." They were permitted to continue to put out

their publication, *Neisti*, and to carry on public activities under their own name.

Before the implementation of the decision to enter the Peoples Alliance there was a split in the Trotskyists' organization in January 1984. According to Central Committee member Petur Tyrfinngsson, the minority group left the party "over three questions: [the party's] turn to industry, its turn to the Peoples Alliance, and its decision to establish Leninist organizational principles."⁷ No information is available concerning the numerical significance of the split, or the subsequent history of those who broke away.

Erlingur Hansson has indicated that during the struggle within the United Secretariat in the 1970s, the Icelanders had been with the "Europeans." He added, in November 1984, that "in the conflict which is now going on we have not taken a stand on all issues, but those we have taken a stand on we are nearer to the SWP of the United States."⁸

Trotskyism in India

During the nearly half-century of existence of Trotskyism in India the movement there has experienced many of the same kinds of controversies and divisions which have plagued it in most other countries. Although relatively little influenced by the splits within the Fourth International, Indian Trotskyism has been affected by the strong influence of regionalism in Indian politics and has experienced the same kind of personalistic struggles which have characterized the movement elsewhere.

In addition, Indian Trotskyism has been faced with the existence of two other Marxist parties to the left of the Stalinists which have been regarded by most other elements of the Indian Left as being "Trotskyist" and whose leaders have in fact shared at least some of the ideas and positions of The Old Man and his followers. These are the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), neither of which, in fact, ever belonged to the Fourth International or any of its factions.

Because of the importance of the RCP and RSP in the evolution of Indian Trotskyism we shall, in the pages which follow, not confine our discussion only to those parties and groups which have professed loyalty to the international Trotskyist movement. We shall also briefly look at the two "semi-Trotskyist" parties as well.

The Beginnings of Indian Trotskyism

The first Trotskyist groups in India were organized mainly by members of the Communist Party who refused to accept the turn of the Comintern in 1934-35 towards the Popular Front, which in the case of India meant supporting the Indian National Congress Party. R. N. Arya has noted that these people "were denounced as Trotskyists. So

they studied the works of Trotsky, especially *The History of Russian Revolution* and *The Revolution Betrayed*. They ended by accepting Trotskyism."¹

Groups proclaiming loyalty to Trotskyism were established in several parts of India in the middle and late 1930s. Probably the most important of these was that which developed in Bengal, principally in Calcutta, under the leadership of Kamalesh Banerji, with Indra Sen, Dr. P. K. Roy, and Karuna Roy among its other principal figures.² It took the name Communist League.³

Another group was established in the United Provinces (U.P.—later Uttar Pradesh), particularly in the city of Kanpur. The leader of that group was Onkar Nath Shastri, who had come out of the earlier nationalist revolutionary movement and had joined the Communist Party during its Third Period.⁴ By 1937-38, "Shastri had a group of workers at Kanpur and a few students in U.P. and Bihar. He called his group the Revolutionary Workers Party."⁵

There were two principal early Trotskyist leaders in the Gujarat region. One of these was Chandravadan Shukla, "who worked at Bombay and formed groups at Ahmedabad, Ghav Nagar."⁶ The other was M. G. Purdy. Apparently born in England, where his name was Murray Gow Purdy, he sometimes used the name Murgaoun Purdy Singh in India. He had apparently moved to South Africa when quite young, had joined the Communist Party there and, as he reported ten years later to Max Shachtman, had been converted to Trotskyism in 1928. He had some activity in the Bolshevik-Leninist League and International Workers Club in South Africa and finally due to persecution by local authorities decided to go to India.⁷

R. N. Arya has said that before coming to India, Purdy had participated in the Spanish Civil War.⁸ However, Broué has noted that Purdy made no such claim in the letter he wrote to Shachtman in December 1938.⁹ In any case, once arrived in India Purdy "recruited a few individuals from the Congress workers at Bombay and set up a group there.

He chose Congress as his sphere of activity."¹⁰ The Shukla and Purdy groups operated under the name Mazdoor Trotskyist Party (MTP).

In mid-1939 Chandravadan Shukla of the MTP went to Calcutta to meet with some leaders of the Revolutionary Communist Party and discuss possible merger of the two groups. Among those he met with were Gour Pal, Mrinal Ghosh Choudhury, and Magadeb Bhattacharya. Although they agreed on the need for a new revolutionary international they apparently agreed on little else. In the end, there was no merger of the MTP and RCP, although Magadeb Bhattacharya did join the Trotskyist group.¹¹

The various Trotskyist groups worked within the Indian National Congress, at least to the extent of sending representatives to its annual meetings. They were present at the 1938 and 1939 Congress sessions at Haripur and Tripura, where there was a bitter struggle between left-wing and right-wing elements in the Congress, and they were joined at these sessions by representatives of the newly emerging Trotskyist movement of Ceylon. The Trotskyists, understandably, supported the Congress left.¹²

R. N. Arya has noted that in that period the Indian Trotskyists had no contact with Trotsky or the international movement. They did not hear about the establishment of the Fourth International until the winter of 1939-40.¹³

Trotsky himself seems to have been largely unaware of the existence of groups of his followers in India. He was informed occasionally about current political trends in the subcontinent by Stanley Plastrik (using the party name Sherman Stanley), a young member of the Socialist Workers Party in New York, who on his own initiative had taken it upon himself to learn about the subject and had various correspondents in the Congress Socialist Party in India. He had also recruited an Indian immigrant into the SWP in New York City.¹⁴

It may have been at Plastrik's urging that Trotsky issued an Open Letter to the Work-

ers of India, on July 25, 1939. In it Trotsky dealt with the impact of the coming war on India and denounced the roles of both the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party. He argued that "those immense difficulties which the war will bring in its wake must be utilized so as to deal a mortal blow to all the ruling classes. That is how the oppressed classes and peoples in all countries should act . . ."

Trotsky then added that "to realize such a policy a *revolutionary party*, basing itself on the vanguard of the proletariat, is necessary. Such a party does not yet exist in India. The Fourth International offers this party its program, its experience, its collaboration. The basic conditions for this party are complete independence from imperialist democracy, complete independence from the Second and Third Internationals, and complete independence from the national Indian bourgeoisie."¹⁵

It was not until early 1942 that a nationwide Trotskyist party was finally established in India. The Ceylonese Trotskyists, some of whom had had personal contact with the Fourth International and with some of the European Trotskyist groups while studying in Britain, played a significant role in bringing together their Indian counterparts.

A number of Ceylonese Trotskyists had fled to India at the beginning of the Second World War either to avoid arrest, or after having escaped from police custody. Several of the Ceylonese, including Colvin de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene (who in India used the name K. Tilak) settled in Calcutta, and entered into contact with the local Trotskyists there. Other Ceylonese made contact with the Uttar Pradesh Trotskyist group, including C. F. Shukla and R. N. Arya; Philip Gunawardena contacted the Bombay group, while Victor Keralasingham worked with the Trotskyists in Madras.¹⁶

R. N. Arya has noted that between the Ceylonese and Indian Trotskyists there was "thorough discussion over programme and policy," and that this "resulted in the adop-

tion of a programme and the formation of a single party, Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India. . . ."¹⁷ By the end of 1941 there had been established a preliminary Committee for the Formation of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India. It issued an extensive document entitled "The Classes in India and their Political Role," which set forth an orthodox Trotskyist analysis, arguing that neither the native bourgeoisie, nor the peasantry (although the latter made up 70 percent of the total population) could lead the struggle against imperialism and for revolutionary change. Only the proletariat, although numbering only 5,000,000 people, could carry out these tasks, and it could only do so under the leadership of a real revolutionary party, which once it had gained power would simultaneously carry out the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution and the beginning of the socialization of the economy.¹⁸

Arya has noted that the Trotskyists "finally formed the party in 1942 when they were all living underground. . . ."¹⁹ Most of the existing local Trotskyist groups became part of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party. Among its leaders were Onkar Nath Shastri, Chandradavan Shukla, and Kamallesh Banerji. M. G. Purdy and his supporters did not join the group but maintained a separate party of their own.²⁰

The Bolshevik-Leninist Party (BLP)

The BLP adopted a program. R. N. Arya has remarked that in this program, "The new party noted the conflict between the imperialists and the Indian bourgeoisie, the two partners of the bourgeois exploitative system in India, but it was clear to them that the national bourgeoisie were incapable of playing any revolutionary role, being themselves closely tied to feudalists as well as imperialists. They held that the working class in India was strong enough to play an independent role, and win leadership of the

revolution by winning the poor peasants and agricultural proletariat to its side."

Arya has also noted that "the program characterized the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers' state, and condemned Stalin's policy of reaching compromise with imperialists at the expense of world revolution. The theory of Permanent Revolution was accepted as the party's guiding principle."²¹

The BLP got off to a good start, with the launching of a party publication, *Spark*, first issued in Calcutta. Later, when police repression made that necessary, the periodical was shifted to Bombay, and its name was changed to *New Spark*.²² They also published Trotsky's Open Letter to the Indian Workers and several other pamphlets, including one attacking Gandhi as a "utopian, reactionary and counter-revolutionary," and one opposing the Stalinists' support of the war as a "people's war."²³

During the remaining years of World War II, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party had at least modest influence in the trade union and student movements of several Indian cities. This was the case in Calcutta and Bombay, as well as Madras, where the party established substantial nuclei among the tramway workers and the workers of the Buckingham and Carnation textile mills, as well as among students in at least two of the institutions of higher learning in the city.²⁴

The BLP was recognized by the International Secretariat in New York as the official Indian Section of the Fourth International, as was indicated by an IS document, "Manifesto to the Workers and Peasants of India," dated September 26, 1942.²⁵ During much of the World War II period, contact between Fourth International headquarters and the Indian Trotskyists was maintained largely through Ajit Roy, a leading figure in the BLP who went to Britain, ostensibly to study there, but in fact principally to maintain liaison with the FI. After the war, Kamallesh Banerji, upon being released from jail, went to Europe and became at least for a time a member of the International Secretariat.

About three months after the establishment of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party the Indian National Congress Party launched its Quit India Movement, calling for a civil disobedience campaign against the British until they gave up control of India. The Trotskyists and other far leftists supported the objective of British expulsion from India but did not approve of the methods used by the Congress. Gour Pal has noted that the Trotskyists "risked their everything to transform the imperialist war into a civil war and socialist revolution involving the workers and poor rural population in areas where they worked. . . ." In doing this, he adds, "The Trotskyists unmistakably proved their real revolution metal and loyalty to their ideology."

However their efforts to convert the Quit India movement into a revolutionary one brought severe reprisals upon the Bolshevik-Leninist Party. Its preparations for its first national conference were disrupted, and many of its principal figures were arrested, including Kamalesh Banerji and Indra Sen.²⁶ Others were forced to go into hiding. Persecution of BLP leaders did not end until the termination of the war.

Governmental repression undoubtedly undermined the BLP in another way. R. N. Arya has noted that "unity, however, could not last long. Shastri was arrested at Kanpur in September 1942 before the cadres of his party were integrated into the new Bolshevik-Leninist Party. When he came out of jail in 1945 at the end of the Second World War, he declared that he would have nothing to do with the 'Ceylonese,' i.e. the BLP. His group of students stayed in the BLP, while he revived his RWP within his group of Kanpur workers. Shukla left BLP in 1943 following some quarrel in a meeting of the CC of the BLP in which one of the Ceylonese comrades, Philip Gunawardena, slapped him. He had his groups at Bombay, Ahmedabad, Ghav Nagar, and a few other places."²⁷

It was not until early 1946, several months after the end of the war, that the BLP

was able to hold its first All India Conference at Nagpur. At that meeting it was decided that the Ceylonese section of the party would be separated from the Bolshevik-Leninist Party. Some of the Ceylonese assumed the name they had used before the war, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party.²⁸

With the end of the war the Indian Trotskyists were for a time quite optimistic about the prospectives for the BLP. K. Tilak (Leslie Goonewardene) wrote in September 1945 that "the young Bolshevik-Leninist Party . . . now faces its first real chance for expansion . . . The situation is changing and without doubt, of all of the parties and political groups in India, the BLP is the one which is going to gain most in this change. . . . Only the BLP offers a program and clear policy, while on the other side, the name of the IVth International today has a power of attraction for the revolutionary elements which comes from instinctive recognition that it is the continuer of the revolutionary traditions of the III. . . . The Indian section of the IVth International faces a great opportunity, that of transforming itself from a small persecuted group, with a revolutionary program, into a party with sufficient cadres to turn with confidence towards the real task of winning over the masses."²⁹

In the immediate postwar years the Trotskyists made some modest progress, particularly in the organized labor movement. R. N. Arya has observed that they "entered trade unions at Madras, Bombay, Secunderabad, Calcutta, and Raniganj, and Kanpur."³⁰ Gour Pal has also noted that "In the industrial belt of Calcutta, BLP had developed considerably. It controlled Khardah Jute Mills Workers Union, Bengal Fire Brigade Workers Union, workers unions in Tittagarh Paper Mills, Bengal Paper Mills, Tribeni Tissues, and also the central organization, Paper Workers Federation. . . . BLP secured a good hold among the coal mine workers around Raniganj [W. Bengal] and in 1948 Jagdish Jha, an outstanding BLP labour leader took charge of the coal mine workers move-

ment in that area." Pal also noted that the BLPI had some success among the peasant organizations of Bengal in the same period.³¹

Soon after their first conference BLPI members (and other Trotskyists and far leftists) were presented with an entirely new political situation in the country. After serious disturbances within the Indian armed forces, the British Labor Government finally came to the decision to negotiate Indian independence with the country's two major political groups, the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League. Of course the upshot of these negotiations was the formation in 1947 of a Provisional Government headed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the partition of the subcontinent in the following year into India and Pakistan.

These developments contradicted the analyses and confident predictions of the Trotskyists, such as the International Secretariat's statements in its 1942 "Appeal to the Workers and Peasants of India" that "British imperialism will never accept the national independence of India,"³² and that "the loss of India would provoke without any doubt a socialist revolution in Great Britain."³³ In the face of the agreements among the Congress, the Moslem League, and the British government, the Indian Trotskyists "rejected the Independence deal as formal political independence, and began to prepare for the stage of socialist revolution."³⁴

As independence approached, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party denounced the way in which it was taking place. Their statement read that "the direct rule of British imperialism is ending. The job of governing the country has been handed over to the Indian bourgeoisie, with whom the British imperialists have entered into a partnership. . . . Despite a certain improvement in the relative position of Indian capital, the volume of British capital investment in India has undergone no significant change, while the grip of imperialist capital over the exchange banks, insurance companies, and in shipping and key positions in industry continues. . . . The

direct rule of British imperialism, we declare therefore, is being replaced by *indirect rule*."³⁵

Entrism

The country's changed political circumstances brought the Trotskyists of the BLPI to reassess their strategy and tactics. They began to think in terms of entrism. They first turned towards the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) as an appropriate field to apply an entrism strategy. As early as 1946, a (BLPI) delegation consisting of Ajit Roy, Indra Sen, and a third person met with Sudhir Dasgupta, Tarapada Gupta, and Gour Pal of the RCP to discuss the possible merger of the two groups. These negotiations failed because of the refusal of the RCP to have the united group join the Fourth International, and the rejection by the Trotskyists of what they considered a very premature campaign by the RCP to establish soviets (under the name of *panchayats*) throughout the country.³⁶

Two years later the BLPI leaders decided upon another organization to which to apply the entrism strategy. Shortly after the independence agreement, the Congress Socialist Party, which had until then operated within the Indian National Congress as a recognized affiliate of the Congress, decided to break away and reorganize as the Socialist Party. In doing so, it expressed considerable disillusionment with the nature of the deal which the Congress Party had struck with the British government.

The Bolshevik-Leninist Party held two conferences at which entry into the Socialist Party was considered. The first, in Madras, rejected the action but suggested that advice be sought from the Fourth International.³⁷ There is no indication that such advice was forthcoming or what it was if it was received. However, Gour Pal has argued that "The BLPI folly of 'entry tactics' must be traced to the Fourth International direction to its colonial units in its resolution adopted in the World Congress in April 1946, as be-

low: 'Our sections must, furthermore, undertake systematic and patient fraction work within the revolutionary national organizations of those countries, with the goal of creating a Marxist revolutionary tendency within them, to facilitate the leftward development of the revolutionary national elements.'³⁸

A second conference of the BLPI to consider entry into the Socialist Party, held in Calcutta, likewise rejected the idea, but by a very small margin. After further discussion those who had opposed the idea finally accepted it. As a consequence, negotiations were entered into with Jai Prakash Narayan, Ashoka Mehta, and others in the leadership of the Socialist Party, who finally agreed to accept within their ranks the members of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party. Such entry took place in 1948.³⁹

The Indian Trotskyists' first experiment with entrism did not prove to be satisfactory. This was largely a result of the failure of the Socialist Party to develop as the BLPI and the leaders of the Socialist Party expected. As a result of that disillusionment the former Bolshevik-Leninist Party people were within a few years once again organized as a separate party.

When the Congress Socialist Party had broken away from the Indian National Congress Party its leaders had hoped that it would become a major party, offering a Socialist alternative to the increasingly conservative Congress party and government. This did not prove to be the case.

R. N. Arya has sketched the conditions after the achievement of independence which thwarted the hopes of the Socialist Party (and of the Trotskyists within it). He has written that "it was a period of capitalist reconstruction and development after unprecedented destruction during the Second World War. Technological revolution took place which placed capitalism on a new footing. India also shared this general prosperity. Although its share could not be big enough to solve its problems, there was a visible change. Nehru introduced five-year plans

and claimed that he was building a socialist pattern of society. The state itself took a hand in the industrialization of the country, established some basic industries, built canals and tube-wells for the irrigation of fields, and subsidized small industries. General elections were held every five years and even a Communist Government was permitted in one of the states, giving the illusion of growth, prosperity, stability, and democracy. The political influence of the Indian bourgeoisie strengthened rather than lessened. Reformist illusions spread and overtook even some of the old revolutionaries, who joined the Congress."⁴⁰

In the face of this the hopes of the Socialist Party were smashed. They did very badly in the first postindependence elections in 1952. As a consequence of this, right after those elections the leaders of the Socialist Party decided to merge their organization with a Gandhist breakaway from the Congress Party, the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, headed by A. Kriplani. As a consequence, the Praja Socialist Party was established.

The Trotskyists refused to go along with this move and maintained their own organization, the Socialist Party (Marxist). The former BLPI members in Calcutta had already broken with the Socialist Party even earlier (1950) and had merged with a faction of the Revolutionary Communist Party to establish the Communist League, with a Bengali paper, *Inquilab*, as its periodical.⁴¹

In Delhi still another Trotskyist group maintained the Socialist Party (India), which published an English-language fortnightly paper, *Socialist Appeal*. The editorial board of the paper consisted of Hector Abhayavardhan, Birendra Bhattacharya, and Sachidananda Sinha. From time to time it carried articles by members of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.⁴²

The Mazdoor Communist Party

Meanwhile there were groups proclaiming allegiance to Trotskyism which had not become part of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party

and so had not gone through its experience with entrism. These included the Mazdoor Trotskyist Party and the Bolshevik Mazdoor Party.

The Mazdoor Trotskyist Party was the group which had been organized under the leadership of M. G. Purdy. It had centers of relative strength in the Bombay area and in Hyderabad. Among its leaders in the Bombay region, aside from Purdy, were Ruralidhar Parija, who was active in the Engineering Workers Union, S. B. Kolpe, a journalist and later president of the All India Union of Working Journalists, Thangappan, secretary of the Kamani Metal Industries Workers Union, and Shanta Ben Joshi, also an active trade unionist. Due at least in part to Purdy's influence the Mazdoor Trotskyist Party sought particularly to gain a following among and to support the untouchables and aboriginal groups.⁴³

The leaders of the Mazdoor Trotskyist Party suffered the same kind of persecution during World War II as did the other Trotskyist groups, and many of their leaders were jailed until the end of the conflict. M. G. Purdy was kept in prison after most of the rest were released under suspicion that he had been involved in a mutiny on a Royal Indian Navy ship in Bombay early in 1946. He was finally deported as an undesirable alien. Leadership of his group devolved on Mallikarjun Rao of Hyderabad and S. B. Kolpe and M. D. Parija of Bombay.⁴⁴

A second group which did not join in the formation of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party was the Bolshevik Mazdoor Party. It had local units in Bombay, Madras, and some other centers. It published an English-language periodical, *Bolshevik Leninist*, and a Hindi organ, *Age Kadam* (*Forward March*), which continued to be published during and right after the war. In December 1945 the BWP absorbed a split-away group from the Bolshevik-Leninist Party. The BWP claimed to be affiliated with the Fourth International, although there seems to be little evidence that such was in fact the case.

The Bolshevik Mazdoor Party was strongly opposed to entrism. In April 1946, its periodical *Bolshevik Leninist* criticized the "left petty bourgeois dream of the BLP to consolidate the left forces in the Congress, and asked 'is it a glimpse of its own character? Is it a continuation of leaning towards the easy-going elements like doctors, professors, and tall-talkers? . . . the character of the maneuver shows unmistakable signs of a petty bourgeois leadership in a hurry to manoeuvre with the leftists to achieve sudden balloon-like expansion of the BLP."⁴⁵

The Bolshevik Mazdoor Party and the Mazdoor Trotskyist Party finally merged to establish the Mazdoor Communist Party. Before long this union broke up, however, with the elements of the former Bolshevik Mazdoor Party breaking away again to join the Socialist Party [Marxist] after it was established by those who had originally been in the Bolshevik-Leninist Party.⁴⁶

By the mid-1950s there thus existed three groups in India claiming to be Trotskyist. These were the Communist League of India, the Socialist Party [Marxist], and the Mazdoor Communist Party. None of these, apparently, was affiliated with either the International Secretariat of the Fourth International or the International Committee of the Fourth International, the two factions into which International Trotskyism was then split.

Reunification

In 1955-56 moves were undertaken which were finally to result in the merger of the three Trotskyist parties into a single organization. In the beginning the objective, undertaken on the initiative of R. K. Khadilkar, an M.P. and leader of the Peasants and Workers Party, was the unification of all of the "non-Stalinist, non-reformist groups." It had the support of the leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, Tridib Chaudhury (also an M.P.) and of the three Trotskyist

factions. However, soon after the negotiations had begun Tridib Chaudhury went to Goa, still under Portuguese control, to help those who were fighting for annexation to India, and was jailed for eighteen months. As a consequence further unity negotiations were postponed until after the 1957 elections.

As a result of those elections the broader unity negotiations came to nothing. The Peasants and Workers Party was virtually wiped out in the election, with the result that Khadilkar joined the Congress Party and became a deputy minister in the Nehru government.

Meanwhile the Trotskyists had already begun cooperating among themselves. S. B. Kolpe had begun to put out a periodical in Bombay, *New Perspective*, which apparently published articles by members of all three groups. After the collapse of the broader unity talks the three Trotskyist groups sought to bring about their own unification.⁴⁷

Success was finally achieved at a conference from May 31 to June 2, 1958, at which the Revolutionary Workers Party was established. The new party was a merger of the Socialist Party (Marxist), the Communist League, and the Mazdoor Communist Party.⁴⁸

Delegates were present from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bombay, Gujarat, Saurashtra, Madras, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal. The meeting adopted a program, a constitution, and a statement of policy. It chose Murlidhar Parija of Bombay, who was at the same time general secretary of the United Trade Union Congress of Bombay, as its general secretary. S. B. Kolpe was chosen as editor of the party periodical, *New Perspective*, which he had already been editing for some time. Among the other leading trade union figures of the new party were Raj Narain Arya of Kanpur and Somendra Kumar of Bihar.

A report on the founding conference of the RWP published soon afterwards commented:

The statement of policy analyzed the situation in India since the "Independence Deal" of 1947, and showed that not a single basic problem of the masses has yet been tackled by the Congress government, nor can be solved within the existing socioeconomic framework. It characterized the major Left, such as the PSP, SSP (Lohia), and CPI, as basically reformist in outlook and as major obstacles to the revolutionary mobilization of the masses against capitalism. It defines the foremost organizational task facing the Indian revolutionaries as the unification of all genuine Marxist forces, now lying scattered in different parts of India, into a single organization, and it expresses the firm conviction that both the objective and subjective factors in the revolutionary process, which are now fast maturing both nationally and internationally, will inexorably drive all these forces ultimately to unite. The RWP will strive to bring about a speedy consummation of this process.⁴⁹

The RWP joined the International Secretariat of the split Fourth International. This was the first time since 1948 that the Indian Trotskyists had been affiliated internationally. Their membership in the Fourth International had lapsed when they joined the Socialist Party in 1948, and when the Socialist Party (Marxist) had been established in 1954 it did not seek affiliation with either of the two factions of the FI.

When the three Indian Trotskyist groups established their Unity Committee in 1957 they were approached by Ernest Mandel of the International Secretariat with an eye to their joining the IS. At that time, however, they turned down Mandel's overtures, since they basically sympathized with the International Committee's policies. According to R. N. Arya, "they insisted most on unity in the world movement." Perhaps as a consequence of that desire for unity they finally decided to join the forces of the Interna-

tional Secretariat when the new party was established in 1958.⁵⁰

Entrism Once Again

The Revolutionary Workers Party did not last for long. Once more the Indian Trotskyists attempted to carry out the entrism strategy, this time with one of the two factions into which the Revolutionary Communist Party was divided, that led by Sudhin Kumar.

Gour Pal has written of the beginning of this new entrism experiment:

In 1960 the RCP(K) held its All India Conference in Howrah town, which was quite a sizable gathering, since the Revolutionary Workers Party . . . that just merged with it, attended the conference in strength. . . . It is queer that the same Stalinist position about peaceful coexistence with capitalism and socialism in one country was accepted, although all the members of the Revolutionary Workers Party, who merged, and attended the conference were avowed Trotskyists, they were the majority of the combined party and they (RWP) claimed that the merger took place on the basis of an agreed program . . . Sudhin Kumar was elected party secretary. Five CC members were elected from the ex-RWP members by agreement. In the next general election in 1962, Anadi Das and Kanai Pal (ex-RWP) were nominated by the RCP(K) for Assembly seats of Howrah Central and Santipur, respectively, and both were elected.⁵¹

The end of this new entrism phase of Indian Trotskyism came as a consequence of the Chinese invasion of India in September 1962 and the reaction of the RCP(K) to that event. The Central Committee of the party adopted a resolution in which it proclaimed that "Peking must not be allowed to develop chauvinism on both sides of the border, with impunity, and hence, must be resisted by Nehru's army, by all means with RCP's full-

fledged backing." As a consequence of this resolution most of the former RWP leaders and members appear to have resigned from the RCP(K).⁵²

The Socialist Workers Party

A new national Trotskyist party was not established until August 1965. It was principally the group in Bombay led by S. B. Kolpe who took the initiative to call a conference in that city which resulted in the establishment of the Socialist Workers Party.⁵³ Among those attending in addition to Kolpe were Shanta Ben Joshi, Bastant Joshi, and Muralidhar Parija, who was elected general secretary of the new party.⁵⁴ Kolpe became editor of *Marxist Outlook*, the SWP's periodical in Bombay.⁵⁵ In 1967, after Gour Pal, formerly a leader of the Revolutionary Communist Party, joined the SWP, he undertook to help Kolpe expand the periodical from a magazine appearing every two months to "an agitation propaganda fortnightly." Among those who soon became members of the new party there were a number of editors of political journals published in the Hindi, Bengali, and Urdu languages.⁵⁶

During its early years the SWP was joined by several trade union leaders in the Bombay, Gujarat, and West Bengal areas who had formerly belonged to the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the original Maoist group which had broken with the Communist Party of India at the time of the Chinese invasion. These included leaders of textile workers and miners, among others. In West Bengal the party also recruited a number of leaders of peasant and agricultural laborers' organizations, composed of members of the CP(M) and of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, among others, who led important strikes of their members in the 1968-70 period in the face of strong opposition from the United Front state ministry.⁵⁷

The Second National Conference of the SWP took place in Baroda (Gujarat) early in February 1968. Gour Pal has written that

"the conference finalized a draft program, and took a unanimous stand on various national and international questions, and elected a Central Committee, a Central Secretariat, and Magan Desai as Secretary of the party."⁵⁸

Magan Desai wrote of this conference that "the party has pledged its defence of the property relations in the Soviet Union and other workers states, including Cuba, but has characterized the regimes in Soviet Russia, China, and the East European states, etc., as bureaucratically degenerated workers states. It has called for political revolutions against the bureaucratic privileges and for the revival of workers' democracy in these countries."

Desai also noted that the conference adopted a resolution on "non-Congress governments" in several Indian states. It "strongly criticized their opportunist multi-class character and has said that the so-called non-Congress governments—even the left-dominated governments in West Bengal (now dismissed) and in Kerala—have subverted the interests of the capitalist class and played the role of the defenders of bourgeois property relations. . . . The resolution has called for the creation of a united front of workers and peasants parties and for the creation of new organs of mass struggle in the form of workers councils and peoples committees in West Bengal."⁵⁹

Although the SWP condemned the collaboration of self-proclaimed revolutionary parties such as the RCP and the RSP in "bourgeois" governments, neither did it support the more or less spontaneous guerrilla reaction of the Naxalbari dissidents from the Communist Party (Marxist) which arose in the late 1960s. *Marxist Outlook* of July 1967 said of these movements: "We would . . . warn the Left CPI militants leading the Naxalbari movement that an isolated peasant struggle cannot succeed unless it is linked with the movements of the working class in the neighboring plantations and in urban areas. The immediate necessity for them is

to break decisively with the hypocritical class collaborationist politics of their leaders. Every effort must be made to extend the struggle to other parts of West Bengal and to forge a united front of workers and peasants in their common struggle against the bourgeois state."⁶⁰

At the time of the Second Conference, Desai reported, the SWP had "functioning units" in the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Kerala. He observed that "the party has built a substantial base in the trade union and peasant movement in several states of India."⁶¹

In terms of political tactics the SWP followed various policies in the different states. For instance, during the early years of its work in Kerala "the SWP functioned as part of the Marxist League of Kerala, which included dissidents from the CPI(M), the CPI, and the Revolutionary Socialist Party. . . ." However, it was announced early in 1969 that "Now the SWP has decided to act on its own in the state." It also decided at the same time to establish a party youth group, the Young Communists (Trotskyists).⁶²

In Bombay, on the other hand, according to Gour Pal, the SWP "developed very close fraternal ties with the Maharashtra unit of the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India . . . and the Lal Nishan Party [a Maharashtra-based leftist party] . . . RSP, Maharashtra unit more or less fully endorses Fourth International and SWP theoretical position and program . . . SWP had in 1969 set up a coordination committee of the three parties, which worked for about a year, undertaking seminars, demonstrations, study classes, and other activities jointly, including camps. . . ."⁶³

The first years of the SWP were marked, as a June 1969 resolution of the party's Central Committee proclaimed, by "a great deal of 'confusion' in left politics. But one positive gain is the open debate now taking place in every left party . . . about the tactics and strategy of the revolutionary movement."

The Central Committee of the SWP added that "the present 'ideological confusion' in the working-class movement can be resolved only in the process of new united struggles of workers, the rural poor, and the radical youth which will throw up a revolutionary leadership guided by the experiences of the Fourth International, which has kept alive the banner of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism in spite of the betrayals of the traditional Stalinist and social-democratic parties on a global scale."⁶⁴

Usually the SWP did not participate in electoral politics with its own candidates. However, in state elections in Kerala in 1970 it did run one candidate for the state parliament, M. A. Rappai, "a former sawmill worker and now a full-time unionist. . . ."⁶⁵ The party issued an "election special" issue of its Malayalam-language periodical *Chenkrathir* and the candidate conducted a walking tour of his constituency covering some 360 miles. The SWP candidate received 362 votes and was not elected.⁶⁶

At the time of the revolt in East Pakistan in December 1971 which brought Bangladesh into existence, the SWP West Bengal State Committee adopted a resolution in support of the movement for Bangladesh independence. It began "We congratulate and extend our unconditional support to the . . . Liberation Forces on their heroic struggle." Then, after charging that "the Indian rulers will not allow any other government than a capitalist one to exist in Dacca," the statement said that "we hope that the Liberation Forces, remembering the mirth and jubilation of the people during 14th August 1947 . . . and the grim aftermath, will march forward to a Red Bangladesh. This will immediately pave the way for a United Socialist Bengal culmination into a Socialist Revolution in the entire Indian subcontinent."⁶⁷

The Communist League of India

The Third National Conference of the Socialist Workers Party met in Bombay during

the first week of January 1972. It was attended by delegates from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Kerala, and Maharashtra. Livio Maitan was there representing the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The most important decision of the conference was to change the name of the organization to Communist League of India (CLI). A new Central Committee was charged with redrafting the program of the party. Magan Desai was reelected Secretary of the Communist League.⁶⁸ The name of the party's central organ was changed from *Marxist Outlook* to *Red Spark*.⁶⁹

The most important political document adopted at the conference of the Communist League was one dealing with the emergence of Bangladesh. This long document denounced the failure of the Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist) in West Bengal to give adequate support to the Bangladesh independence government. It also said that the Indian government's military intervention and consequent war with Pakistan resulted in "a war between two bourgeois states," and "had its own reactionary features. The military support extended by the Indian government to the freedom struggle in Bangladesh was motivated by the class interest of the bourgeoisie in extending its market and creating a new sphere of investment."

The CLI document also denounced the actions of both the Soviet government in supporting India and the Chinese regime in backing Pakistan. It ended with a list of ten "transitional demands" which included immediate withdrawal of Indian troops from Bangladesh, immediate elections "to choose a new Constituent Assembly to draft a socialist constitution for Bangladesh," agrarian reform, nationalization "of all means of production, including land," and "linking up the struggle of the masses of West Bengal with the struggle of East Bengal to establish a United Socialist Bengal."⁷⁰

Soon after the Communist League convention the government called provincial

elections throughout the country. The CUI issued an election manifesto on this occasion. It proclaimed that "thanks to the class-collaborationist politics of the traditional left parties they have destroyed the image of an independent working-class challenge to the bourgeois Congress. The masses have lost faith in the bourgeois electoral processes. . . . Under the circumstances, small revolutionary forces represented by parties like the Communist League—the Indian section of the Fourth International—can serve no positive purpose by wasting their limited material resources to fight a costly electoral campaign setting up their own candidates." However, it did call on its followers to "enter the campaign in critical support of the candidates of the working-class parties. . . ."

This electoral proclamation ended by saying, "We reject the theory that socialism can be achieved through bourgeois parliamentary processes. Socialism can be achieved only through revolutionary mass struggles of workers and peasants who must eventually seize control of all means of production, including land, factories, mines, plantations, and all credit as well as financial institutions, through their elected councils. The immediate task is to combat the antidemocratic and repressive measures of the bourgeois state through united struggles of workers and peasants around their immediate social and economic demands, linked with the objective of an anticapitalist socialist revolution in India."⁷¹

After the overwhelming victory of Indira Gandhi's Congress Party in the assembly elections, the Communist League passed a resolution assessing the results: "The revolutionary Marxists in India should not be swept away by the seemingly spectacular sweep of the Congress at the polls. They should not have any illusions regarding the ability of the bourgeois state to overcome the present economic crisis. . . ." The resolution warned that "there is every reason to believe that repression by the bourgeois

state will be unleashed against mass organizations despite the massive victory of the Congress. . . ."⁷²

On June 25, 1975, the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, faced with a deteriorating economic situation and considerable political turbulence, proclaimed an "emergency," virtually establishing a dictatorship. At that point the United Secretariat of the Fourth International issued a document entitled "Rend the State of Emergency in India!" It noted the "attacks against working-class parties like the CPI(M). . . and the banning of several Maoist organizations." It did not mention any action being taken by the Gandhi government against the Communist League, perhaps because the Trotskyist group was not of sufficient significance to have the regime move against it.⁷³

An interview "with an Indian Trotskyist" published in January 1976 stressed that the proclamation of the emergency was just the culmination of a number of other repressive measures taken by the Gandhi government. It also criticized the support of the emergency by the pro-Soviet Communist Party of India, and the collaboration of the CPI(M) with conservative opponents of the emergency, in the so-called Janata Morcha. The Indian Trotskyist then noted that "in Baroda there was an example of a principled revolutionary approach, carried out by the Communist League. . . . When processions were called earlier against the emergency the Communist League participated, but as a separate bloc, clearly distinguished from the Janata Morcha, and chanting its own independent anticapitalist slogans. When the municipal elections were called in Baroda, the Communist League was able to field two candidates for municipal council, both of them militant workers participating in the workers committees in their factory that has been fighting against the bonus cuts."⁷⁴

The Communist League was considerably weakened during the emergency period. R. N. Arya has noted that both S. B. Kolpe

and former CL general secretary M. Rashid left the party early in 1976, and that six months later Arya himself and Mahendra Singh "also left the party as they felt that the new party had cut itself off completely from the old traditions."⁷⁵

When elections were finally called in March 1977, putting an end to the emergency, the Communist League issued an election manifesto proclaiming that "We the Trotskyists of the Communist League, the Indian section of the Fourth International, view this election as a main battle of the bourgeois parties to sidetrack the consciousness and movement of the working class and the toiling masses." It then listed a series of demands for ending all repressive measures taken before and during the emergency, as well as for liberalization of labor legislation and measures to reduce the cost of living. It also called for "nationalization of all means of production, transport, and communication without compensation under workers control," and "speedy implementation of land reforms through and under the control of democratically elected poor peasants committees."

The Communist League also ran one candidate for parliament in the 1977 election, in Baroda. He was Tlaker Shah, a member of the League's Central Committee, and in charge of the organization's trade union activities.⁷⁶

Although the CL thus maintained a completely "independent" position in the 1977 election, a number of those who had recently left the party did not. Arya has noted that "Trotskyists like Raj Narain Arya and Mahendra Singh in [Uttar Pradesh], Rashid in Kerala, and C. Gomez in Bombay supported the anti-Congress candidates on the slogan of defeating the Emergency regime. They exposed the Janata Front as an equally bad capitalist combination but for the time being committed to fighting the Emergency rule. They kept themselves united to the Janata wagon and when the mass struggles of workers broke out, they were always in them."⁷⁷

R. N. Arya had developed sympathy for and contacts with the Militant Group of Trotskyists in Great Britain. He left the Communist League in 1977. However, instead of trying to organize a separate Trotskyist organization, he decided in 1980 to enter the Revolutionary Socialist Party.⁷⁸

When in January 1980 new elections resulted in the restoration to power of Indira Gandhi and her faction of the old Congress Party, the CL issued a statement warning that the Gandhi government would probably dissolve all state governments not controlled by the Gandhi Congress faction. The statement added that "While the CL has never placed any political confidence in these governments or extended its support to them since they are capitalist governments administering a capitalist state, the CL opposes any move by Gandhi to dissolve or oust them. The CL urges all left parties and civil liberties groups and mass and class organizations to initiate a mass movement to oppose such sinister moves. The CL also opposes and condemns the preventive detention ordinance and any move to enact such draconian measures."⁷⁹

The Communist League did not get around to holding another national conference (officially referred to as its fourth) until November 1982. That was held at Santipur in West Bengal, and there were representatives from Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Bihar as well as "good participation from West Bengal."⁸⁰

Arya has sketched the state of Trotskyism in India by the middle of 1983:

[The] Communist League still continues as a small group in Baroda, Bombay, Samastipur (Bihar), and Calcutta. Some of those who have left CL have formed BLC (Bolshevik Leninist Group) mainly centered in Bombay and Kerala. They stand by the Fourth International, CL is the official section of the FI. Another group of Trotskyists functions at Bangalore which follows the Militant tendency of the U.K. Labour Party. . . . U.P. Trotskyists Arya

and Mahendra Singh have joined RSP to work for the consolidation of all the forces of socialist revolution.⁸¹

The Revolutionary Communist Party

One of the two Indian far left parties which is widely regarded by other leftists as being "Trotskyist" but which in fact never belonged to the Fourth International or any of its factions is the Revolutionary Communist Party. This group was organized in August 1934 by Soumeynora Nath Tagore, a delegate to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928 who had opposed the lurch to the Third Period Left being urged by Stalin's associates. The organization originally took the name Communist League.⁸² At the Third Conference of the organization in 1938 the name was changed to Revolutionary Communist Party of India (RCPI).⁸³

During its first years the Revolutionary Communist Party carried out a wide range of organizing activities. It established unions among unorganized workers and at the same time worked within some of the established labor organizations, it played an important part in the growing student movement, and it had some activity among the peasants.⁸⁴

Although originally established in reaction against the sectarianism of the Comintern's Third Period, the RCPI was equally opposed to the Popular Frontism which succeeded the Third Period. The significance of this in India was its strong and continuing opposition to the Indian National Congress Party. This was seen most particularly in its opposition to the Congress Socialist Party, the left-wing group formed within the Congress. The RCPI leader S. N. Tagore published books denouncing both the Popular Front policy in general and the Congress Socialist Party in particular.⁸⁵

Shortly before the outbreak of World War II, which it was felt would bring persecution of such a group as the RCPI, the party developed a three-tier leadership group, the top level of which, composed of its best-known

figures, would continue open activity until picked up by the police. A second level of less conspicuous leaders would work clandestinely, and a still lower group, not publicly identified with the party, would take over party leadership if the underground leaders were also arrested. As expected, S. N. Tagore and others were jailed under the Defence of India Act soon after the war began, when the RCPI came out with a statement denouncing the conflict as "an imperialist predatory war for redistribution of the colonial world, and calling on impoverished nations not to help the warmongers. . . ."⁸⁶

The RCPI strongly supported the Quit India movement launched in August 1942 by the Indian National Congress Party, but sought to turn it into revolutionary rather than passive resistance channels. This brought even wider arrests of the leaders of the party, most of whom were not released until the end of the war.⁸⁷

As independence approached after World War II the Revolutionary Communist Party began to organize workers and peasants "panchayats," embryonic soviets, in preparation for struggle against the new Congress-controlled government. It developed the idea that on the basis of these groups—which it invited other far left political groups to join and help build—an ultimate Workers and Peasants Constituent Assembly could be established to organize a Socialist India.

On this general position there was no major dissension within the party. However, in 1948 the RCPI split between those supporting Pannalal Das Gupta, who had become party secretary general during the war and had a background as an activist in terrorist organizations before joining the RCPI, and the opponents of Pannalal under the leadership of S. N. Tagore. The Pannalal group extended the *panchayat* idea to the point of beginning to plan for an immediate violent seizure of power, and collected arms for that purpose. The Tagore faction regarded such activities as adventurist and refused to countenance them. The RCPI National Con-

ference of April 1948 saw the party split into two separate groups, each using the party name.⁸⁸

This split in the RCPI marked the beginning of the decline of the Revolutionary Communist Party. It continued to be divided into the RCPI (Tagore) and the RCPI (Pannalal), the latter becoming the RCPI (Kumar) when Sudhin Kumar succeeded Pannalal Das Gupta as its leader. As we have already noted, the Trotskyists merged for a short while in the early 1960s with the RCPI (Kumar), but abandoned the merger when it endorsed the Nehru government at the time of the Chinese invasion of India in 1962.

Arya, writing in mid-1983, has noted that "Panna Dasgupta himself became a supporter of Nehru when he was released from jail in the early sixties. Whatever remains of this group is led by its life-long secretary Sudhin Kumar, now a minister in the seven-party Left Front Ministry of West Bengal."

Arya added that "the other group continued to be led by Tagore. . . . Tagore has passed away and his group is now split into two parts. One is led by former MLA Anadi Das, and the other by Bibhuti Bhushan Nandi. Anadi group is opposed to the Left Front government of West Bengal. Nandi group supports the Left Front but is out of it. Both seek to trace the path shown by Tagore."⁸⁹

The Ideological Position of the RCPI

It is clear that S. N. Tagore and those who followed him in the RCPI felt a certain political kinship with Leon Trotsky and the movement which he organized. They believed in the Theory of the Permanent Revolution; they believed in the need for a new Fourth International. However, they continued to have serious differences with Trotsky, and had no great respect for those who succeeded him in the leadership of the Fourth International.

In 1944 Tagore published a book, *Permanent Revolution*, where he argued that "the theory of Permanent Revolution has two as-

pects, one relating to the revolution of a particular country, the immediate passing over from the bourgeois democratic phase of the revolution to the socialist revolution. The second aspect . . . is related to the international tasks of the revolution . . . which makes it imperative for the first victorious revolution to operate as the yeast of revolution in the world arena. . . . Trotsky became the target of Stalin's vengeance only so far as he drew the attention of the communists throughout the world to the betrayal of world revolution (Permanent Revolution) by Stalin."

Tagore also argued that "the theory of P.R. is not Trotskyism. . . . Lenin was just as much a champion of the P.R. as Trotsky was, and with a much more sure grasp of revolutionary reality. But Trotsky certainly had done a great service to revolutionary communism by drawing out attention over and over again to the theory of Permanent Revolution since Lenin died in 1924, and the sinister antirevolutionary reign of Stalin started. In the face of the next diabolical machineries of vilification and terror of Stalinocracy, he kept the banner of revolutionary communism flying in the best traditions of Marx and Lenin. Therein lies Trotsky's invaluable service in the theory of Permanent Revolution. So far as the Theory itself is concerned, it is pure and simple revolutionary Marxism."⁹⁰

Whatever regard the RCPI leaders had for Trotsky they did not extend to his Indian followers. Thus, a thesis "The Post War World and India" passed by the Fourth Party Conference of the RCPI in December 1946, in which was put forward the idea of establishing embryonic soviets throughout the country, commented that "objections to our slogan 'from Panchayats' have been voiced from different quarters. The Indian Trotskyists, who are far away from all that Trotsky really represents, have dubbed our slogan . . . as ultra-leftism and adventurism. . . ."⁹¹

In his book *Tactics and Strategy of Revolution*, published in 1948 when the Bolshevik-Leninist Party was entering the Socialist

Party, S. N. Tagore was even harsher towards the Indian Trotskyists. He wrote of "those panicky petit-bourgeois capitulators, who so long had paraded themselves as Trotskyists, without having anything to do with the revolutionary teachings of Trotsky, had in the past clung to Trotsky more like religious devotees clinging to their guru, than as revolutionary communists accepting things after critical analysis. They moreover have chosen some mistaken tactics of Trotsky as a justification for their abject capitulation, abandoning all his great teachings on ideological and strategic lines of revolution. . . ." ⁹²

In the abstract at least the PCPI favored establishment of a new revolutionary International. Thus, the Fifth Congress of the PCPI (Tagore) passed a resolution in 1948 which argued that "since organizing world revolution is possible only through a world party, the development of a revolutionary International is one of the most essential tasks of the revolutionary proletariat of the world in general, and our party in particular." ⁹³

At its Sixth Congress the PCPI (Tagore) in February-March 1960 passed a resolution which stated:

Our task in the international field is to work for the emergence of this revolutionary world force. . . . To unite and work for the creation of a new International, on the basis of the revolutionary internationalist programme of Lenin and Trotsky. . . . The PCPI hopes for the creation of such an international by mutual exchange of views with the Fourth Internationalist groups in the countries of Europe, America, and China, with the Independent Communist Party of Germany, the Leninist Internationalist Party of France, the Proletarian Revolutionary Party of Tan Malaka in Indonesia, and other anti-Stalinist groups in various countries, professing revolutionary internationalist policy. ⁹⁴

One significant point on which the PCPI

clearly disagreed with the Fourth International was in its analysis of the nature of the Soviet state and other Stalinist regimes which had appeared after World War II. At its Sixth Conference the PCPI (Tagore) proclaimed: "The Soviet state is no longer a workers' state; it is a state of labor bureaucracy. . . antagonistic to the laboring masses in Russia and abroad. . . ." With regard to China, "Instead of a proletarian Socialist State, the Stalinist 'New Democracy' in China prepares the way for an anti-working-class totalitarian, bureaucratic rule of the Stalinist party. . . ." ⁹⁵

At its Seventh Congress in November 1961, the PCPI (Tagore) expanded on its characterization of the Stalinist states. Its resolution, "Revolutionary Communism—The World and India," declared:

Industrial production in Soviet Russia is not Socialist in character as will be clear from the following: 1. The wealth produced does not go to raise the standard of living of the people, but of the bureaucracy. . . . 2. People have no democratic voice and control in the productive system. . . . 3. The wage differential in the Soviet society is on the increase. . . . 4. Moreover, the domain of personal property had been enormously extended by the Stalin Constitution. . . . 5. The bureaucracy enjoys powers and immense privileges. . . . 6. . . . In the social and political spheres, inequality and curtailment of freedom prevail. . . . There is no freedom of opinion or the press in Stalin's Russia. ⁹⁶

Just as in capitalist society, labor aristocracy signifies the existence of a group of people, which though originating from the working class, has separated itself from the working class, likewise labor bureaucracy signifies in Russia and in such other countries, where proletarian revolution has been successful, the existence of a group of persons who, their proletarian origin notwithstanding, have separated themselves from the class. . . . If all this is true, then doesn't the mere fact of the

existence of the state-ownership of the means of production and the system of planned economy signify that the state is a workers' state? And more so, when it is clear, that the bureaucracy did not sit idle with expropriating the proletariat politically, but had also introduced and continue to introduce profound deformities in the economic life of the country as well.

The Fourth Internationalists have not, while defending Trotsky's analysis of 1934 that the Soviet Union is a degenerated workers state, advanced a single argument of their own by analyzing the Soviet State as it is today. . . . A revolutionary international is of utmost importance for the world proletariat. We had therefore welcomed the establishment of the Fourth International. Though we had our misgivings about the actual organizational structure and strength, we hoped that in time . . . the initial weakness would be replaced by growing strength. For us, what is of primary importance is the ideological stand of the Fourth International. . . . Till these fundamental differences are ironed out, our party cannot find its way to affiliate itself with Fourth International.⁹⁷

From its analysis of the nature of the USSR and other Stalinist states, the RCPi in its 1961 resolution also drew a policy conclusion which directly conflicted with the position of the Fourth International. It stated that "in case of a war breaking out between the Stalinist Bloc and the imperialist bloc, we support neither of the blocs. . . . Victory of Stalinism, in our opinion, will be as great a menace to Socialism as the victory of imperialism."⁹⁸

The Revolutionary Socialist Party

The Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) has had an even less clear orientation towards Trotskyist ideas than did the RCPi for many

years. However, R. N. Arya, a longtime Trotskyist leader who joined the RSP in 1980 without forswearing Trotskyism, has said that "this group holds positions which are very akin to Trotskyism, and the Stalinists insist that it is a Trotskyist group."

Arya has described the origins of the RSP. He has written that "another group of Marxist-Leninists to turn away from Stalinism was the group of former revolutionaries—members of the Anushilan and Jugantar groups of national revolutionaries and of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army or Association who studied Marxism-Leninism in the early 1930s when they were in jail, and decided to function independently of the Communist Party and Communist International."⁹⁹

Most of those ex-"terrorists" came out of jail in the late 1930s, and Tridib Chaudhury, the RSP secretary general, had noted that "all of these revolutionaries would have joined the Communist Party on coming out of jail. But the Communist International had, only a little earlier, under the instructions of the Soviet Russia's Communist leader, Stalin, and in the interests of the self-defense of Russia, adopted the policy of alliance and compromise with British and French Imperialism against Germany in Europe and with American Imperialism against Japan in Asia. . . . Revolutionary Socialists realized that behind this policy of the Communist International stood largely the national interest of Russia. . . . This policy the revolutionaries could not accept. . . ."¹⁰⁰

The Revolutionary Socialist Party was organized in March 1940. Arya has noted that "it is obvious that the revolutionaries who founded RSP . . . had no idea that a Trotskyist organization, Fourth International, had come into existence in September 1938. At that time Fourth International was confined only to some countries of Europe and North America, and consisted of small groups. . . . But to claim that RSP rejected Trotskyism because one or two leaders of the present RSP find fault with some aspect of the theory

of Permanent Revolution advanced by Trotsky is not true. Organizationally, RSP never took any decision about Trotskyism. It has rather invited and wooed Trotskyists into its fold. Even those leaders who object to Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution . . . do not realize that what they follow as Leninism in the light of their own understanding is what Stalinists call Trotskyism, and that Trotskyists themselves claimed Trotskyism to be nothing more than the Marxism-Leninism of the present epoch."¹

Over the years the Revolutionary Socialist Party has remained the largest of the parties to the left of the Stalinist Communists. They have occasionally been able to elect a handful of members of state legislatures, particularly in Kerala and West Bengal. They have also served at least twice in United Left ministries in both states.

Conclusion

For half a century a Trotskyist movement has existed in India. The official Trotskyist organization has never become a major factor even on the far left of Indian politics. Geographically, it has been confined largely to the provinces or states of Bengal, Gujarat, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, and, for short periods, Madras. It has had generally unsuccessful experiences with the entrism strategy and has been plagued with the personalism and frequent party switching which seem to be endemic in Indian politics.

For half a century there have circulated unconfirmed reports of the existence of a more or less influential Trotskyist movement in Indonesia. As early as 1938 the Comintern's *International Press Correspondence* wrote that "the Trotskyists are developing a disruptive and destructive policy which is combined with provocative activities. In their daily practice they pretend to be the true followers of the CP and those of the Comintern. . . ."¹ In this case, the Comintern periodical was attacking Mohammed Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir, who were never Communists of any sort, let alone Trotskyists.

The Indonesian leader most frequently referred to as a Trotskyist or a possible Trotskyist has been Tan Malaka. One of the early leaders of the Communist Party of Indonesia, he reportedly opposed the Asian policies being imposed on the Comintern by Stalin in the mid-1920s, and which were most clearly reflected in the Kuomintang-CPC alliance in China. According to Jack Brad, writing in the Shachtmanite periodical *Labor Action*, "in 1926, the CP split on the issue of class independence in the nationalist struggle. Tan Malaka, refusing to go along with Stalinist policy, organized an insurrection on Java and Sumatra which lasted through 1927 but was defeated in a bloody suppression. The party was outlawed by the Dutch and was 'reprimanded' by Moscow and Tan Malaka, a fugitive from ruthless butchers of the imperialists, was expelled from the Communist International."²

Clearly Tan Malaka continued to consider himself a Communist. During the struggle for Indonesian independence following World War II he organized the Murba Party (Proletarian Party). The avowed aim of this party was "to organize and mobilize all revolutionary powers of the Indonesian people

with the purpose of destroying the aggression of the capitalists and imperialists and laying down the foundation of a Socialist Society in Indonesia."³ It proclaimed that it was organized "according to the principle of Democratic Centralism."⁴

The *New York Times* reported that Tan Malaka had been executed by the Indonesian Republican government on April 16, 1949.⁵ The Indian weekly *The Radical Humanist*, organ of the one-time Right Oppositionist M. N. Roy, in reporting the rumors of Tan Malaka's death, referred to him as being "described as a Trotskyist."⁶ Some months later, the same periodical expressed uncertainty as to "whether he is really a Trotskyist, or a Titoist type of nationalist Communist."⁷

The reports of the "Trotskyism" of Tan Malaka and his followers have died hard. They have been particularly propagated by Stalinists of various schools. The magazine *Progressive Labor*, organ of the then Maoist Progressive Labor Party, published an article in 1967 entitled "Who is Adam Malik?" referring to one of the leaders of Tan Malaka's Murba Party. This article talked about "the brazen intrigues of Adam Malik and his fellow Trotskyites. . . ."⁸

The fact is that Tan Malaka, although a dissident and usually anti-Stalinist Communist, was never a Trotskyist. Ernest Mandel, the Belgian Trotskyist leader who kept particularly close touch with the Fourth International groups in Asia, has described the status of Trotskyism in Indonesia: "There was never a Trotskyist organization in Indonesia before 1959. Tan Malaka had some common traits with Trotskyism in his policies, but he never declared himself as such, nor affiliated with any Trotskyist grouping. Some of his lieutenants, like foreign minister Adam Malik, degenerated into right-wing reformists or worse."

Although Tan Malaka was in fact not Trotskyist in spite of his reputation for being such, there did exist for a short time a Fourth International affiliate in Indonesia.

Mandel has explained that "in 1959, the Partai Acoma, an offspring of the CP youth, affiliated with the Fourth International. It had a member of parliament, Ibnu Parna, a very fine mass leader. Unfortunately, he was arrested in the Suharto *putsch* in 1965 and killed. Since that counterrevolution, we have no contact with the Partai Acoma. In emigration, some CP cadres breaking with both Peking and Moscow came closer to our positions, but without affiliation."⁹

International Committee of the Fourth International of the 1950s

For most of the decade following the split in the Fourth International in 1952-53 International Trotskyism was divided into two separate organizations, one led by Michel Pablo, the post-World War II Secretary of the FI, the other composed of opponents of "Pabloism." The anti-Pablo forces were more or less loosely joined in the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Emergence of the International Committee

Events in the last months of 1953 moved quickly towards an organic split in the Fourth International. On October 3-4 a meeting was held in London of representatives of the British section of the International, the French majority group which had been expelled the year before, and the Swiss section. Sam Gordon of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States also attended "individually." That meeting decided to set up a "provisional committee" of two representatives each from the French, British, and Swiss sections. At that point, what was being organized was a faction within the International. The meeting declared that "the delegates declare their political agreement on the international perspective on the character of the Soviet bureaucracy and Stalinism. They decided to undertake together the defense of Trotskyism against Pabloist revisionism and the struggle against the liquidation of the Fourth International." They also agreed to prepare documents for submission to the Fourth Congress of the International.¹

On November 7-8, 1963, the SWP held a plenum at which it expelled the Cochranite faction. The International Secretariat sent a letter to this meeting. After noting that the SWP had not yet submitted any critique of the documents for the Fourth World Congress, this letter claimed that "To build a faction under such conditions, then to bring it forth brusquely in the late of day and then violently oppose it to the International leadership becomes, frankly, an unprincipled, unspeakable operation, profoundly alien to the traditions and nature of our movement."² It ended saying, "Avoid a fundamental political crystallization on this or that line before previous discussion between delegations responsible to your leadership and the IS or the IEC. Put above any other consideration the unity of our International movement, the unity of your own organization."³

When the SWP leadership clearly did not follow its advice, the IS issued a "Letter from the Bureau of the International Secretariat to the Leaderships of All Sections" signed by Pablo, Pierre Frank, and Ernest Mandel, and dated November 16, 1963. It began, "The most revolting operation has just been launched against the unity of the International. The majority of the American organization, cynically defying the most elementary rules of our international movement, and its traditions as well as its leadership have just excluded by the decision of its plenum of November 7-8, the minority which declares itself in agreement with the line of the International."⁴

After noting that Cannon and his associates, as well as Healy, had until recently supported the International leadership, the letter noted that "Their 100 percent about-face of today dates only a few months back. How then to explain it?"

The letter answered its own question: "If they now act in this way it is above all to safeguard the personal clique regime in the midst of their organizations that they consider threatened by the extension of the in-

fluence of the International as a centralized world party. . . . Fixed on old ideas and schemas, educated in the old organizational atmosphere of our movement, they really represent politically and organizationally the sectarian tendency which recoils from the movement of the Social Democratic or Stalinist masses or feels itself ill at ease within it. They further remain profoundly resistant to all real integration into a centralized world party. . . ."⁵

This letter then proceeded virtually to read the SWP out of the international Trotskyist movement. It said, "The International was, remains and will remain a political movement and a principled organization. It will not compromise on its principles, it will never permit the expulsions effected by Cannon, nor those which Burns [Gerry Healy] is preparing in England. With all our forces we ask the IEC to stigmatize these measures, to enjoin those who have taken them to immediately withdraw them and to reintegrate forthwith the expelled members within their organizations. Any other road followed by anyone whatsoever could only place them outside our movement."⁶

Meanwhile, in addition to expelling the Cochranites the SWP plenum had adopted "A Letter to Trotskyists Throughout the World." This document, after reciting a bit of the postwar history of the Fourth International "restated" the fundamental principles of Trotskyism. It then proclaimed:

These fundamental principles established by Leon Trotsky retain full validity in the increasingly complex and fluid politics of the world today. . . . These principles have been abandoned by Pablo. In place of emphasizing the danger of a new barbarism, he sees the drive toward socialism as 'irreversible,' yet he does not see socialism coming within our generation or some generations to come. Instead, he has advanced the concept of an 'engulfing' wave of revolutions that give birth to nothing but 'deformed', that is, Stalin-

type workers states which are to last for 'centuries.'⁷

After criticizing a number of specific acts of the Pablo leadership including its support of the Cochranites, the letter said:

To sum up: The lines of cleavage between Pablo's revisionism and orthodox Trotskyism are so deep that no compromise is possible either politically or organizationally. . . . If we may offer advice to the sections of the Fourth International from our enforced position outside the ranks, we think the time has come to act and to act decisively. The time has come for the orthodox Trotskyist majority of the Fourth International to assert their will against Pablo's usurpation of authority. They should in addition safeguard the administration of the affairs of the Fourth International by removing Pablo and his agents from office and replacing them with cadres who have proved in action that they know how to uphold orthodox Trotskyism and keep the movement on a correct course both politically and organizationally.⁸

This appeal of the SWP was soon answered. On November 23, 1953, a "Resolution Forming the International Committee" was issued from Paris over the signatures of Gerry Healy, Bleibtreu of the French majority, Smith of the "New Zealand" Section [apparently Farrell Dobbs of the SWP] and Jacques of the Swiss section. It proclaimed:

1. We affirm our solidarity with the fundamental line of the appeal of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party to the Trotskyists throughout the world, and particularly with the definition therein of the programmatic bases of Trotskyism. . . .
2. We consider as having forfeited its power the International Secretariat of the Pabloist usurpers, which is devoting its activity to the revisionism of Trotskyism, the liquidation of the Inter-

national and the destruction of its cadres.

3. Representing the vast majority of the Trotskyist forces of the International, we decide to constitute an INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. . . . We call on the leadership of all the sections of the Fourth International to establish relations with the leadership which represents the Trotskyist program and the majority of the forces of the International. Every responsible cadre, every Trotskyist militant concerned with the unity of the International and the future of his national section, must clearly and swiftly take a position as between the revisionist and liquidationist center of the Pabloist usurpers, and the International Committee of the Fourth International.⁹

The fourteenth plenum of the IEC of the Fourth International, which met December 26-28, 1963, retaliated against the signers of the SWP's "Letter" and the resolution establishing the International Committee. It resolved: "a. To suspend from membership in the International all members of the IEC who signed the split appeal which appeared in *The Militant* of November 16, 1953, or the appeal of the 'Committee of the Fourth International,' or who support the appeals, and endeavor to rally the sections of the International on this basis. b. To suspend from their posts in the leadership of the sections all those who signed these appeals, or who support them and endeavor to rally the sections of the International on this basis. c. To leave the final decision on these cases to the Fourth World Congress."¹⁰

The fourteenth plenum also decided to recognize as official sections the minority groups of the SWP and of the British section.¹¹ Finally, it replaced Gerry Healy on the IEC and the IS with John Lawrence, and added representatives of the German and Dutch sections to the International Secretariat.¹²

Those who had launched the Interna-

tional Committee were able to gain some additional recruits. These included the exiled Chinese section based in Hong Kong,¹³ and the Canadian section, although the Canadian group underwent a split as a consequence of this decision.¹⁴

Of course the International Committee had the support of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. An editorial in *The Militant* said that "the organization of the International Committee signifies that the Fourth International has once again proved its historic viability. It shows that no force on earth, external or internal, can destroy it."

The editorial concluded: "We hail the formation of the International Committee of the Fourth International. Because we are compelled to remain outside the International organization due to the reactionary Voorhis Law of 1940, we are all the more interested and concerned with the development of the Fourth International. The International Committee insures the line of revolutionary continuity that extends from Lenin, through Trotsky, and into the future victory of socialist mankind."¹⁵

The International Committee from 1953 to 1963

The International Committee of the Fourth International did not hold full-fledged congresses such as those of the Pabloite group. Pierre Frank has noted that it "really functioned not as a centralized organization but as a faction with loose ties among its members. According to information supplied by comrades who took part in the International Committee, there were few international meetings of the committee, political positions often being formulated, in the form of documents from national sections, after exchanges of views between the committee's sections."¹⁶

However, from time to time there were limited meetings of representatives of the parties and groups associated with the Inter-

national Committee. For example, one such meeting took place in Paris in November 1955. It adopted resolutions on the so-called Parity Commission between the Pabloites and the IC, and on "Solidarity with the Algerian Struggle for National Liberation."¹⁷

The nearest thing to a worldwide meeting of the International Committee was a world Conference which met in Leeds in 1958. The leading role was apparently taken by the delegates of the SWP of the United States, whose principal resolution was adopted at the meeting. The Latin American delegates to the conference submitted several documents which were critical of the attitude of the SWP within the International Committee, particularly its allegedly "federal" concept of the nature of the Fourth International, and particularly of the International Committee, and of overtures which the SWP leaders had made for reunification with the International Secretariat. However, the resolutions submitted by the Latin Americans were not formally considered by the conference.¹⁸

One development within the International Committee which was to have considerable future impact on the evolution of International Trotskyism was the formation of a Latin American organization within its ranks. This resulted from a meeting in October 1954 which set up the Comité Latinoamericano del Trotskismo Ortodoxo (CLA), consisting of Nahuel Moreno from the Argentine POR-Palabra Obrera, Humberto Valenzuela of the Chilean POR and Hernández from the Peruvian POR.

The CLA organized in March 1957 what it called the First Conference of Latin American Orthodox Trotskyism, which established the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism (SLATO), which continued to exist until December 1964. Starting in 1957 SLATO issued a more or less regular publication, *Estrategia*, edited by Nahuel Moreno and appearing in Buenos Aires. Although some other groups were nominally affiliated with SLATO, its major affiliates

continued to be those of Argentina, Chile, and Peru.¹⁹

In April 1961 SLATO held its second meeting, in Buenos Aires, where it paid particular attention to the phenomenon of Castroism in Latin America. It also adopted resolutions requesting the International Committee to publish all documents on the subject of Castroism and the Cuban Revolution which had been adopted by the member groups of the IC, and calling for a general discussion of the Castroite phenomenon within the ranks of the International Committee.²⁰

The position of SLATO was later summed up thus: "SLATO decidedly oriented itself to the perspective that the Cuban Revolution had provoked a decisive change in the relations of forces between imperialism and the masses, in favor of the latter, with a leading role for the agrarian revolution and the armed struggle . . . and that a petty bourgeois revolutionary nationalist movement on continental dimensions, Castroism, had appeared. A correct line for the construction of Trotskyist revolutionary parties must take into account these new phenomena, in particular, guerrilla war, incorporating them in the traditional program of Trotskyism."²¹

After first categorizing the Cuban regime as a workers state "in transition," SLATO soon came to regard it as a "bureaucratic workers state." As a counterpart to this definition, SLATO advocated a "political revolution" in Cuba as in other "workers states."²²

SLATO formed the core of what in the 1970s and 1980s was to be the "Morenoist" tendency in International Trotskyism.

Pierre Frank has noted concerning relations between the IC and the IS that "beginning in 1956, the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the Sino-Soviet dispute brought the positions of the two groups closer on the question of the crisis of Stalinism. Moreover, on the problems of the colonial revolution, members and sympathizers of the International Committee, especially those in North America and Latin America, under-

went an experience with the Cuban revolution that was in many respects similar to the Fourth International's experience with the Algerian revolution."²³

From time to time, the International Committee issued general statements. One of the most significant of these was the Manifesto of the International Committee of the Fourth International (Trotskyist) on the Hungarian Revolution, published in November 1956. It proclaimed that "the Hungarian people, arms in hand, have revolted against the native Stalinist bureaucracy and its Russian overlords. In the course of their heroic struggle, they have established workers councils in several important industrial towns." It went on to argue that "to destroy Stalinist bureaucratic oppression and counterrevolution, the Hungarian workers council (or soviet) method of organization, which as in Russia in '17, forms the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat [sic]."

This document appealed to the members of the Communist parties to use the betrayal of the workers by their parties in the Hungarian situation to get rid of their Stalinist leaders. It also appealed to the Soviet armed forces, calling upon them to "Remember the revolutionary traditions of the Red Army founded by Leon Trotsky. Solidarize yourselves immediately with the gallant Hungarian fighters for socialist freedom organized in their soviets."²⁴

As negotiations progressed toward reunification of International Trotskyism—which ultimately culminated in the establishment of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in 1963—the International Committee split. Some of its national sections entered the new United Secretariat, others continued in existence as a rump International Committee.

International Committee of the Fourth International of the 1960s

A substantial part of the anti-Pablo International Committee of the Fourth International (IC) which had functioned during most of the 1950s refused to go along with the "reunification" of the Fourth International which resulted in the establishment of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in 1963. This dissident element of the IC centered on the British Socialist Labor League (SL) of Gerry Healy and the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) of Pierre Lambert. For something less than a decade these two organizations and a few other national groups of less consequence maintained their own version of the International Committee.

Third Conference of the International Committee

Those groups remaining in the International Committee held a conference shortly after the establishment of the United Secretariat and proclaimed their unwillingness to participate in USEC. They held their Third (and last) Conference in London in April 1966. It was reported that "Delegates and observers from ten countries attended. Delegates from two African countries were prevented from attending by passport difficulties."¹

This 1966 conference adopted three basic documents: a resolution on "Rebuilding the Fourth International," a "Report of the Commission on Rebuilding the Fourth International and the Tasks of the International Committee," and a "Manifesto." It also defined which national groups would

be welcome in the International Committee and which ones would not.

Subsequently, polemics were to develop within the IC over whether the task before it was to "rebuild" the Fourth International or to "continue" it. Apparently the resolution of the 1966 conference on the subject was something of a compromise. At least the SLI leaders were later to argue that "while it is formally true . . . that the final resolutions in some places retained the terms 'reconstructing' and 'rebuilding,' what is certain is that the *content* of these resolutions was above all the continuity of the independent parties and of the FI fought for and preserved by the IC. . . ."²

The basic political resolution of the conference recounted the history of the "degeneration" of the Comintern, the "betrayal" of post-World War II revolutionary possibilities by the Soviet leadership and the Social Democrats, and the struggle within the Fourth International from 1952 on. It concentrated particular attention on the alleged "revisionism and liquidationism" of the "Pabloites" and the United States Socialist Workers Party.³

The organizational report also adopted by the 1966 conference proclaimed that "the London Conference reaffirms that the program and method for the building of the revolutionary parties and the Fourth International are to be found in the Transitional Program. This program remains the only one that is capable of providing a solution to the problems raised by the historical crisis of revolutionary leadership." It also asserted: "The Conference affirms that the Fourth International has not degenerated. . . the continuity of the Fourth International has been fought for and maintained by the International Committee's actions."

This report also called for the holding within eighteen months of "the Fourth International Conference, whose aim will be to rally all Trotskyist organizations fighting for the program of the Fourth International. This will include a struggle by the Interna-

tional Committee to rally to the ranks of the Fourth International the militants and groups who are misled by the revisionist leaders of the United Secretariat."⁴ The Fourth Conference did not take place.

The most important organizational decision of the Third Conference was to exclude from the membership the Spartacist Group from the United States and the Voix Ouvrière group from France, which had been represented by "observers."⁵ The "American Commission" of the conference delivered a report which was unanimously adopted by the official delegates to the meeting. It recognized the American Committee for the Fourth International—which like the Spartacist group had originated from a split in the Socialist Workers Party in the early 1960s—as the United States affiliate of the International Committee and gave it instructions to organize as such.⁶ Of course, the IC already had a French section, the OCI, which more or less automatically meant the exclusion of Voix Ouvrière.

The "Manifesto of the International Committee of the Fourth International" adopted by the conference had three sections: "1. The crisis opened by the war continued. . . 2. The bureaucracies against the revolution in Vietnam. . . 3. Build the revolutionary leadership!" This last portion set forth the basic orientation at that time of the IC in subdivisions under the following headings: "The Fourth International Fights Unconditionally for: The Victory of the Vietnamese Workers and Peasants. For the Defeat of U.S. Imperialism"; "The Fourth International Fights for the Unconditional Defense of the Conquests of the Chinese Revolution"; "The Fourth International Fights for the Independence of the Trade Unions From the State"; "The Fourth International Fights for the United Front of the Working Class"; "The Fourth International Fights for the United Socialist States of Europe"; "The Fourth International Fights Against Slander and Repression"; and "For the Rebuilding of the Fourth International."⁷

Interestingly enough, there was no emphasis on or discussion of the importance of the philosophy of dialectical materialism in any of the documents adopted at the Third Conference of the IC. Thus, a question which was to be one of the pretenses for the split in the organization half a dozen years later seems not even to have been a subject of discussion at the 1966 meeting.

Although the Healy-Lambert version of the International Committee did not hold any other full-blown international conference after that of 1966 it did have several somewhat more restricted sessions at which all or most of its national sections were represented. There was a meeting of the International Committee in June 1967 which was attended at least by representatives of the British, French, and Hungarian sections, and its discussion centered principally on the most recent Arab-Israeli war.⁸ In September 1967 another meeting of the IC had an agenda dealing with the situation in Ceylon, work of the youth section, an "international discussion," an assessment of problems of the sections in Greece and the United States, and celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.⁹

Although other detailed information has not been encountered concerning similar IC meetings subsequent to 1967, it is clear that preparations were begun for another full-blown conference of the IC and its affiliates. To this end, "In July 1970 a preconference of the IC sections and groups associated with it was held, a step towards an international conference regrouping organizations, groups, and militants who base themselves on the Transitional Program."¹⁰ This was the last more or less general meeting of the Healy-Lambert International Committee as a single tendency of International Trotskyism.

Even during the existence of the Healy-Lambert tendency there was some debate about how many national affiliates it had. The OCI maintained in November 1971 that there were eight regular sections in the In-

ternational Committee: the SLL of Great Britain, the OCI of France, the League of Social Revolutionaries of Hungary, the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR) led by Guillermo Lora in Bolivia, the Revolutionary Communist Party of Ceylon, the Liga Obrera Marxista of Mexico (LOM), the League for a Workers Vanguard of Ireland, and the Workers League of the United States. It maintained that the two groups emerging from a split in 1967 in the original Greek affiliate of the IC had been accepted as "sympathizing groups" rather than regular sections of the International Committee.¹¹ On the other hand, the SLL at about the same time denied that POR had ever been accepted as a full member of the IC and insisted that the majority Greek group after the 1967 split had continued as a full-fledged section of the International Committee.¹²

Efforts were made to extend the scope of the Healy-Lambert IC during the years it existed. There was a group of Hungarian exiles who formed a Hungarian section. It took the lead in 1969 in organizing a "conference of members from Eastern European countries . . . which led to the formation of the Organizing Committee of Communist (Trotskyist) Militants of Eastern Europe. . . ." There is no indication given as to how many such East European members there were, or from which countries they came.¹³

Attempts were also made to expand the organization into Latin America. In 1969 the faction of the Bolivian POR led by Guillermo Lora became associated (in one way or another) with the International Committee, and in the following year, the Mexican LOM was recognized as a regular section of the International Committee. Then in February 1971, "on the initiative of the OCI, acting on behalf of the International Committee, a meeting was held in Europe for Latin American organizations and militants, with the aim of preparing the conditions for rebuilding the Fourth International in Latin America."

Aside from the Bolivian POR and the Mexi-

can LOM, there was present at that meeting representation of the Argentine group known as Política Obrera "which has proclaimed its loyalty to the Transitional Program from its foundation, but has until recently developed on the fringes of the internationally organized Trotskyist movement. . . ." The Brazilian Trotskyist Bolshevik Faction, a breakaway from the Posadas group in that country, had been prevented from sending a delegate by the military dictatorship. Finally delegates were reported as attending from Peru, Brazil, and Venezuela "in an independent capacity."¹⁴

A long resolution was adopted which put forward the slogan of a "United Socialist States of Latin America." It was maintained at the meeting that the two countries of the region which had at that moment the most fertile ground for the advent of a socialist revolution were Bolivia and Argentina.¹⁵

Understandably, the International Committee concentrated a good deal of its attention on the rival United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Aside from frequent denunciations of USEC in periodicals and official resolutions, there was at least some exchange of polemical pamphlets between the two groups, particularly in the earlier years. Gerry Healy published early in 1967 a pamphlet, *Problems of the Fourth International*, which centered most of its attack on the United Secretariat, and particularly on the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.¹⁶ The USEC replied in kind. In the same year Ernest Germain (Mandel) put out the pamphlet *Marxism vs. Ultraleftism: Key Issues in Healy's Challenge to the Fourth International*.¹⁷

In spite of these polemics, an effort was launched by the IC in 1970 to recommence "discussions" with USEC. Gerry Healy met on two occasions with members of the USEC concerning "the possibility of joint discussion centered on outstanding political differences and directed towards the holding of a joint international conference"; USEC turned down these overtures.¹⁸

Split in the Healy-Lambert International Committee

From its inception the Healy-Lambert International Committee had a kind of bipolar characteristic. The two strongest groups in the organization, the Socialist Labor League of Great Britain and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste of France, both led by strong-willed characters tended to group the other national sections of the organization around them in a more or less satellite fashion. The tension between these two factions reached a breaking point in 1971-72.

It is clear that there were differences of opinion and interpretation of the position of the International Committee between the leaders of the SLL and the OCI at least as early as the Third Conference in 1966. However, these differences were compromised at that time.

In May and June 1967 there was an exchange of long letters between the OCI and the SLL in which they criticized one another in a more or less gentlemanly fashion. The OCI complained about the inability of the SLL to keep a functioning international apparatus going for the IC. The major element of dispute between the two groups at that time was the concept of the OCI of the necessity to "rebuild" the Fourth International, in contrast with the SLL's contention that the FI continued to exist in the International Committee, the major organization requirement of which was that it build new sections in various countries.¹⁹

However, in spite of these early disagreements it was not until 1971 that matters came to a head between the SLL and the OCI, leading to a split in the International Committee. By that time Healy and the other leaders of the Socialist Labor League had come to place extraordinary importance on the role of the philosophy of dialectical materialism and on the need to propagate it and to apply it to current situations. For its part, although not discarding dialectical

materialism the OCI leadership emphasized the importance of the specific revolutionary program to the success of the socialist revolution, and most particularly the importance of the Transitional Program enunciated by Trotsky in 1938 to this end. This issue was ostensibly one of the causes of the 1970-72 split. The other was differing opinions concerning the role of the Bolivian POR in recent and current events in that country.

The situation began to reach crisis proportions in July 1971 in Essen, Germany, at a Youth Rally officially sponsored jointly by the Alliance des Jeunesses pour le Socialisme (AJS) and the Young Socialists, the youth groups of the OCI and SLL respectively, but principally organized by the French group. The OCI reported that some 5,000 young people from thirty-two countries attended the meeting, including many who did not consider themselves Trotskyists, such disparate groups being represented as the youth organization of the Spanish POUM and the National Students Association of the United States.²⁰

The AJS, on behalf of the International Committee, had drawn up a draft resolution for adoption by this youth assembly. It elaborated at some length on the rise of revolutionary possibilities in the industrial capitalist countries, as well as the developing ones, and on the supposedly growing pressure for political revolution in the "workers states," and urged the special role to be played by the young people in this alleged revolutionary wave.²¹

The British Young Socialists introduced an amendment to the AJS motion which said in part: "The continuity of the struggle for revolutionary Marxist theory in the past, the struggle of the Fourth International and the International Committee, was the only basis for the initiatives which led to this rally and for the struggle to build the international revolutionary youth movement. Revolutionary youth everywhere must devote themselves above all to the task of de-

veloping Marxist theory through the struggle against bourgeois ideology in all the forms it takes in the workers' movement."²²

The amendment offered by the Young Socialists was opposed by the AJS and was not voted upon at Essen but was referred to the Liaison Committee elected at the Essen rally. When the Liaison Committee finally met in November 1971, the Young Socialists did not attend, so once again no definitive vote was taken on their amendment and the Liaison Committee urged the Young Socialists to take their place on it at its next meeting in January 1972.²³

Meanwhile, a controversy had begun over the role which the POR had played during the ten-month regime of General J. J. Torres, which ended with Torres's overthrow in a short civil war in August 1971. The POR of Guillermo Lora had played an important role in the "Popular Assembly" formed by unions, peasant organizations, and left-wing political parties during the Torres government, meeting in the building of the National Congress (which had been dissolved). Lora and his OCI supporters maintained that the Popular Assembly was a "dual power" roughly equivalent to the Russian soviets in 1917, and that Lora and its other leaders had been carrying out the kind of united front which the Trotskyists had always advocated; they had prepared the way for the socialist revolution, only to be cut short by military insurrection and the unwillingness of General Torres to arm the workers and peasants. The SLL leaders strongly attacked Lora and the POR for having "supported" the Torres government and for not launching the slogan for his overthrow, arguing that the POR's attitude had been a "betrayal" of Trotskyist principles.

The documents involved in this controversy included an editorial published by Tim Wohlforth of the U.S. Workers League on August 31, 1971, which was republished in the SLL periodical, attacking the behavior of Lora and the POR; a statement by the Central Committee of the OCI on September 19,

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1971, defending the position of the POR, and a statement dated October 12, 1971, signed by Lora for the POR, Pierre Lambert for the OCI, and Balasz Nagy for the League of Socialist Revolutionaries of Hungary, supporting the POR's position, but saying that the party's behavior should be carefully studied by the IC, and condemning "the method used by the Workers League and the SLL."²⁴

Following this exchange, a document was issued on October 24, 1971, by the "majority" of the IC, reportedly including representatives of the SLL, the Workers League, the Revolutionary Communist League of Ceylon, the Workers International League of Greece, and the League for a Workers Vanguard of Ireland. That document denounced actions of the OCI going back as far as 1967, returned to repudiation of the POR and its behavior before and during the Torres regime, and took exception to the OCI's organizing a meeting in Paris at which Stephane Just of the OCI was described as "Secretary of the IC for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International." The document claimed that "this is a split from the IC and its politics. It is a split by a minority."²⁵

On November 24, 1971, the Central Committee of the OCI replied to this "majority" document. It denied that those who had signed the October 24 statement constituted a majority of the IC, and charged that by organizing a meeting of the five groups which had signed the statement, the SLL and its allies had in fact been the ones who provoked a split in the International Committee of the Fourth International. At considerable length it again defended the OCI and the POR, and denounced the recent behavior of the Socialist Labor League.²⁶

In any case, regardless of who had been responsible for the final acts which constituted a split in the International Committee, that split was a fact by the end of 1971.

In most of the two decades after World War II probably the most outstanding, if controversial, leader of International Trotskyism was Michel Raptis, better known as Michel Pablo. However, even before the "reunification" of a substantial part of the Fourth International in the United Secretariat in 1963, Pablo had begun an ideological evolution which was first to bring him to establish a small faction of International Trotskyism and then to lead that organization into giving up its allegiance to Trotskyism.

Origins of Pablo's Split With Trotskyism

Michel Pablo participated in the formation of the United Secretariat in 1963. However, when USEC held its first congress, he was absent, the first time since the European Conference of 1944 that he had not participated in a major meeting of International Trotskyism. By the time the 1965 meeting was held, Pablo was already outside of the ranks of that faction of the movement which was led by USEC.

The United Secretariat explained the exit of Pablo thus: "Michel Pablo, while greeting the reunification, held views on a number of points conflicting with the position of the reunified movement . . . he has gone so far as to issue his own public factional organ," and by late 1965 had been "suspended from leadership in the Fourth International."¹

According to Pablo's supporters the situation was somewhat more complicated. When Pablo was finally released from prison in Amsterdam he went to London, where he was provided with a Moroccan passport, and

went to Morocco, where he worked with Algerian rebels until the end of the Algerian War. When peace finally came he went to Algiers, where he had a long conversation with the leader of the new Algerian regime, Ahmed Ben Bella, who ended up asking Pablo to be his political adviser. This was the first and only time that the Trotskyists had ever gotten in a position of even advisory leadership in a revolutionary regime.

The Reunification Congress authorized establishment of an African Bureau of the International, headed by Pablo. This organization began issuing a periodical, *Sous le Drapeau du Socialisme*, identified as the organ of the African Bureau of the Fourth International. However, USEC soon issued a statement that the magazine had been published without the approval of the International, and did not reflect its views.²

Michel Pablo himself has stated his principal discrepancies with the United Secretariat. They were: "1) My disagreement with the assessment of Maoism by the USEC as evolving towards revolutionary Marxist positions, to which it was necessary to offer critical support. 2) My disagreement with the assessment of the Khrushchev tendency of the Soviet bureaucracy as a simple personal quarrel. I had maintained at the time that the K. tendency was more receptive to the pressures of Soviet society than the other more Stalinist tendency which sought to overthrow him. 3) My disagreement with the support given by the USEC to Holden Roberto against the MPLA (in Angola). I favored support of the latter."³

The Pabloist group subsequently described what occurred to them. They said that "for having publicly defended these ideas our comrades were accused by the USEC of the period of gravely violating 'democratic centralism,' and thus putting themselves outside of the IV International."⁴

There followed a purge of Pablo's supporters from the apparatus of the United Secretariat. These included not only Pablo himself, but Ismael Frías of Peru, Denis Ander-

son of Australia, and Simon Maillet and Gilbert Marquis of France. Some of these continued for some time to be active in their national sections of the United Secretariat.

Evolution of International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency

Pablo and his associates soon established their own organization, the International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of the Fourth International (Tendance Marxiste-Révolutionnaire Internationale de la Quatrième Internationale—TMRIQI). This group had its first international meeting in 1972 when it dropped the reference to the Fourth International from its name and at the same time proclaimed that it no longer considered itself "Trotskyist." Nor did they any longer claim to be the party of the world revolution. They were merely a Marxist tendency which was particularly dedicated to fostering "autogestion," that is, self-government on all levels—the workers in the factory, and so on, up through the various layers of the economy and society.

By 1982 the Tendance Marxiste-Révolutionnaire Internationale (TMRI) had affiliates in France, the Netherlands (where they published a periodical, *Socialisties Zelfbeheer*), Greece (For Socialism), Cyprus (For Socialism), Australia, and Austria. They had individual members in Italy and were in the process of forming a group in Argentina.⁵

By the early 1980s TMRI had developed another major divergence from the ideas of USEC: they no longer considered the Soviet Union and other Communist-controlled regimes to be "workers states." Rather, they categorized them as "bureaucratic states." A resolution of the Seventh International Conference of the TMRI stated their position, quoting with approval an hypothesis which the Soviet Trotskyist Christian Rakovsky had put forward many years before:

The total statization of the economy, brought about by the State in the hands

of the bureaucracy, reinforces its material privileges and its control over the masses, transforming it insensibly into 'a large class of rulers with their own internal divisions, a class which grows through prudent cooptation, direct or indirect (bureaucratic promotion, system of fictitious elections). What unites this original class is an original form of private property, that is, possession of the power of the State. . . . From the moment that the party-State concentrates in its hands all political power and expropriates the masses politically, depriving them of their councils, their committees, their self-governing communes, their parties, their free unions, their free press, etc. . . . the 'Thermidor' is accomplished in the following precise and new sense: in the anticapitalist State established by the Revolution there begins to develop inexorably the dynamic converting it into the bureaucratic State, and not a socialist society. During the process thus begun, the formation of the bureaucracy of the State is reinforced constantly, dominating the State and through it the whole society. . . . [T]he variant produced by history is not that envisaged by L. Trotsky, it is unprecedented.⁶

The TMRI advocated, in place of the "bureaucratic State" what it called "autogestion." It summarized the meaning of this in a manifesto it produced on the occasion of the first direct elections for the Assembly of the European Common Market: "Socialism is nothing other than the democratic power of the workers and the citizens on all levels and in all parts of society. It implies the widest political democracy, and has nothing to do with the ignoble caricature called 'socialism' in the USSR and in the so-called 'popular democracies.'"⁷

In mid-1979 the TMRI issued an "Open Letter to the Members of the Fourth International." It urged that there was need "to develop new directions, new forms of strug-

gle and of organization," as well as "the elaboration of a transition program based on socialist autogestion, and including the strategy proposed to the working class. We think that the elaboration of this program requires the calling together of the currents which support socialism and revolution. In the first place, this debate is necessary among those who claim the tradition of the Third and Fourth Internationals."⁸ The United Secretariat paid little or no attention to this Open Letter.

International Secretariat of the Fourth International of the 1950s

After the split in the Fourth International which took place in 1952-53 the faction which continued to be led by Michel Pablo came to be generally referred to as the International Secretariat (IS) in contradistinction to the International Committee (IC), the anti-Pablo faction. The IS continued to have regular congresses; the International Committee did not. With the passage of time, the IS tended to move away from the strategy proposed by Pablo at the beginning of the 1950s which had provoked the split in the FI.

The Pabloite leadership claimed to retain within its ranks the great majority of the sections. In a letter addressed to the Chinese section the IS wrote that "the following sections: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, Cyprus, France, Germany, Great Britain (majority), Greece, Holland, Italy, Indochina, Peru, Uruguay, that is, the overwhelming majority have said that their organization is only the FI and condemn the split committee."¹

This claim was somewhat exaggerated. The majority of the Canadian section had gone with the International Committee, as had the majority of that of Great Britain. In the case of the Bolivian party a split took place shortly after the schism in the Fourth International. Although the causes of that division in the Partido Obrero Revolucionario were domestic rather than international, a faction led by Hugo González Moscósó aligned with the Pabloites, while the other, led by Guillermo Lora, sympathized with the International Committee, although it may not have officially joined it.²

The Question of Unity and the Fourth World Congress

The Trotskyist party in Ceylon, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), sought to act as mediator in this conflict within the Fourth International. To this end they insisted that all of the groups which had been represented at the Third World Congress should also be invited to send delegates to the Fourth World Congress. To facilitate this the LSSP urged that the congress, scheduled for July 1954, be postponed. The Fourth International leaders refused such a postponement.

Perhaps due to the pressure of the LSSP the International Executive Committee drafted a letter which, according to the document itself, was sent "to all those, without exception, who were members of the International at the time of the Third Congress and who by their own volition have placed themselves outside the organizational framework of the International, centralized world Party."³

Although this document was clearly partisan (arguing, for instance, that "The IC has always been invested with the confidence of the vast majority of the International"), it did urge the recipients to "submit any disputes you may have . . . to this Congress." It continued, "You no longer have confidence in the present leadership of the International, or its organization of this Congress? Offer concrete proposals as to how you envisage your participation in this Congress; state the conditions of the future functioning and leadership of the International which, if adopted or largely satisfied by the Congress, would in your opinion make possible the reestablishment of the unity of the International."

To receive these proposals the IEC set up a commission "which would function prior to the beginning of the Congress sessions. . . ." It named to this commission Leslie Goonewardene of Ceylon, Edward of Germany, Livio Maitan of Italy, Ernest Mandel, J. Posadas of Argentina, Boas of the Nether-

lands, Dumas of the pro-Pablo French group, and Serrano of the Bolivian FOR. The letter argued that "the purpose of this commission is to assure your participation—genuine, not formal—in the Congress, in order to achieve the reunification of our international movement, with the Congress having the sovereign decision."⁴

This letter of the IEC did not serve to bring about the reunification of the International. It did arouse conflicting reactions among groups which had remained with the International Secretariat and the IEC. On the one hand, John Lawrence of Great Britain protested, saying, "As you know, I am completely opposed to your method in this question."⁵ The Cochranite Socialist Union of America also protested, saying that "it is with a sense of strong urgency that we call upon the IEC to reverse the course and to reorient the entire struggle along correct lines."⁶

On the other hand, the Ceylonese LSSP also protested, but from a different point of view. It argued that "the draft appeal as it stands can be construed as a factional document. . . . It is completely out of place for the IEC to make any such declaration. . . ." Therefore, Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, member and alternate member of the IEC for Ceylon, refused to sign the letter.⁷ In the end only those groups which stayed with the Pablo leadership were represented at the Fourth Congress.

The Pabloite Fourth International 1953-63

The Fourth International faction headed by Michel Raptis (Pablo) held three world congresses after the split at the end of 1953. As well as these meetings there were intermittent negotiations for reestablishing the unity of the international Trotskyist movement which culminated in the so-called Reunification Congress of 1963 which, however, only succeeded in partially reuniting the forces of the Fourth International.

The Fourth Congress, meeting in July 1954, was attended by delegates from organizations in twenty-one different countries. It dealt, understandably, with the problem of the split in the International and also discussed and adopted several documents.⁸

Most of the delegates to this congress supported the position which Pablo and his associates had maintained in the conflict with those sections which formed the International Committee. However, a minority, consisting principally of George Clarke from the Socialist Union of America, Murray Dawson of the Pabloite minority from Canada, Michèle Mestre of the pro-Pablo PCI of France, and John Lawrence of the British minority, protested strongly against the compromises which Pablo had made with the Ceylonese LSSP. They finally walked out of the meeting. Fred Feldman has noted that "Mestre and Lawrence immediately joined the Communist parties in their respective countries."⁹

The most important resolution of the Fourth World Congress was entitled "Rise and Decline of Stalinism." The draft of this document, which more or less repeated Pablo's position that the Stalinist parties whether they wanted to or not were increasingly being forced to take the leadership in revolutionary movements in various parts of the world, had been severely criticized by the LSSP of Ceylon. Although in the pre-congress discussion Ernest Mandel (under the name Ernest Germain) strongly answered the LSSP's criticisms. Pablo and his associates finally agreed to accept the modifications suggested by the LSSP.¹⁰

The Fifth Congress of the Pabloite faction of the International met in October 1957 and was attended by "about a hundred delegates and observers from twenty-five countries."¹¹ The congress's discussions centered on three documents. The first of these, "Economic Perspectives and International Policies," was presented by Pablo and it recognized for the first time (for the Trotskyists) that a major world depression was not likely

in the proximate future. It discussed the ways in which the capitalist regimes had prevented such a crisis, and noted that although revolutionary strikes in the capitalist countries were not likely soon there might be extensive economic strikes.

This document also dealt with the economies of the "workers states," noting their rapid progress and suggesting the need for rationalizing their economies. Pierre Frank has noted that "the document emphasized the basic role of workers democracy not only as a political factor but as indispensable for development in the economic area."

Finally the economic document dealt with the situation in the colonial countries. It noted that some economic progress had been made there, but that relatively the colonial nations were falling farther behind the big industrial countries and argued "that the result of this would be a growing impoverishment of the colonial masses and consequently the continuation of the objective conditions that were fanning the flames of colonial revolution."¹²

The second document was on "Colonial Revolution since the End of the Second World War," introduced by Pierre Frank. It "stressed the fact that [such revolutions were] the dominant feature of the postwar period, . . . [upsetting] all the perspectives that had been made since the origin of the working-class movement, even those made after the October Revolution. . . . The congress insisted on the necessity for the Trotskyist movement, especially for the sections in the imperialist countries, to devote a large part of its activity to aiding the colonial revolution."¹³

Finally, the Fifth Congress came back to a new version of the previous meeting's document, "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism," adding another part of it, "The Decline and Fall of Stalinism." It was introduced by Ernest Mandel. The revised document, after tracing the rise of Stalinism, noted "the objective conditions of the new situation: the existence of several

workers states, the USSR become the second world power, the revolutionary rise throughout the world." Pierre Frank has noted that "thus it demonstrates that henceforth there can be no danger, except in the highly improbable case of defeat in a world war, of a restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union," the first time an international Trotskyist meeting had made this fundamental change in the traditional "forward to Socialism or backward to capitalism" dichotomy. It claimed that the de-Stalinization launched by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU the year before constituted "measures of the self-defence—not self-liquidation—of the bureaucracy."¹⁴

Frank concluded concerning this Fifth Congress that "the discussions . . . were broad in scope; certain points were strongly debated by various delegates, but there was no tendency struggle. The International had largely recovered; it came out, once again unanimously, in favor of reunification of the international movement."¹⁵

The last international meeting of the Pabloite faction before "reunification," the Sixth Congress, met early in 1961 with "a hundred participants from about thirty countries." Pierre Frank noted that "because of the fierce and bitter—and politically impoverished—struggle waged by the Posadas faction, the discussions did not allow the International to make any real progress in its thinking. . . . But the documents ratified by the congress were not without importance."

One of these documents, introduced by Ernest Mandel, reviewed the world economic situation, recounting again the means by which the capitalist countries had avoided a major economic crisis. Also, although noting the continued advance of the "workers states," it "refuted Khrushchev's claim, widely believed in that period, to the effect that the USSR would rapidly surpass the USA on the economic plane."¹⁶

Livio Maitan introduced the congress doc-

ument on the colonial revolution. It "made a special study of the situation in a certain number of colonial zones or colonial countries. A great deal of space was allotted to the Algerian revolution. . . . A special resolution was devoted to Cuba, retracing the revolutionary process that had culminated only a short time before in making the island a workers state, the first in the Western Hemisphere."¹⁷

This time Pierre Frank introduced the resolution on Stalinism. It recounted the "reforms" undertaken by Khrushchev and "also made a study of the new contradictions to which the Communist parties were subject. It pointed out the compromise between the Chinese and Soviet leaderships embodied in the text adopted several weeks earlier in the Moscow conference of eighty-one Communist and Workers parties and concluded that this compromise could not be a lasting one, that the Sino-Soviet crisis would inevitably erupt again."

This was the first Fourth International congress since 1948 at which the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon was not represented. The quarrel between that party and the International which two years later would result in the expulsion of most of the LSSP from the International had begun.¹⁸

One of the decisions of the Sixth Congress which was not published at the time was to move the headquarters of the International. Until 1960 it was in Paris but it was concluded that because of the return of Charles de Gaulle to power it was no longer advisable to keep the headquarters there, since the International Secretariat had been particularly active in support of the Algerian Revolution.

In 1960 the headquarters were moved to Amsterdam, where it was thought that the Trotskyists would be freer to operate and where they would be nearer the European headquarters of the Algerian revolution, Cologne. Ironically soon after moving there Michel Pablo was arrested by the Dutch police for his work against the Algerian War

and was sentenced to two years in jail, which he served.

After Pablo's arrest it was decided to move the International Secretariat to Rome. The reason for this was simple: of the three members of the Bureau of the Secretariat—Pierre Frank, Ernest Mandel, and Livio Maitan—Maitan was at that time the only one who could devote full time to the work of the IS. Pablo opposed this decision.¹⁹

International Socialist Tendency

A tendency of International Trotskyism which owed its origins, at least indirectly, to the 1939-40 controversy between Leon Trotsky and the Shachtmanite faction of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States has been the International Socialists. It consisted of groups which agreed with the old Shachtmanite position that the Soviet Union (and subsequently other Communist Party-controlled regimes) were no longer "workers states," degenerated, deformed, or otherwise.

A group with this point of view had emerged in British Trotskyism in the early 1950s. It apparently had little or no contact at that time with the existing Shachtmanite Independent Socialist League in the United States.

Subsequently, the Shachtmanites themselves split, some entering the Socialist Party of the United States, others entering the more orthodox Trotskyist group, the Socialist Workers Party. Some of those who had entered the Socialist Party remained only a short time, finally pulling out to form what came to be known as the International Socialists. They entered into contact in the late 1960s with their British counterpart which had adopted the same name.

Although all of those aligned with the International Socialist Tendency agreed that the Communist Party-controlled regimes were not workers states, they did not agree on what designation should be used for them. At least two interpretations of the issue were used by the different groups. Some accepted the original designation which the Shachtmanites had used, "bureaucratic collectivism"; others within the Tendency argued that the regimes con-

trolled by Stalin's heirs were "state capitalist."

This tendency in International Trotskyism maintained a more or less informal international organization for about half a dozen years. Disagreements over the attitude to be adopted towards the Portuguese Revolution and other issues led to a parting of the ways between the British and United States International Socialists. The former became the Socialist Workers Party of Great Britain, the latter split, with a splinter group remaining in solidarity with the British SWP.

From time to time the International Socialist Tendency has held world meetings. One of these was held in Great Britain in September 1984, and it was reported that it was attended by representatives not only from the British Socialist Workers Party but also organizations in Ireland, Australia, the United States, Canada, Germany, as well as "comrades from France, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway." The meeting dealt particularly with the problems of the smaller IS groups, which perforce could function as nothing more than propagandist organizations.¹ A leading feature of the meeting was a talk by Tony Cliff urging the smaller groups not to pose as more than they really were, and to dedicate themselves to winning converts to their ideas on an individual basis.² Another such international meeting took place in Britain in July 1985.³

international Spartacist tendency

One of the more idiosyncratic currents within International Trotskyism has been the international Spartacist tendency [*sic*]. Its differentiation from other elements of the movement is not only shown in the peculiar way it chose to spell out its name but also in the fact that, in the service of maintaining complete loyalty to the ideas of Trotsky, it gave more complete support during the 1970s and early 1980s to the Soviet regime and those in Eastern Europe and elsewhere associated with it than did any other tendency or group within International Trotskyism, with the exception of the Australian Socialist Workers Party, which ended up totally repudiating Trotskyism.

The international Spartacist tendency (*ist*) was more or less directly a split-off from the International Committee of the Fourth International of the 1960s. It had its origins in a split in the Socialist Workers Party of the United States in the early 1960s. At that time two groups of younger leaders and members of the swp, most of whom had belonged previously to the Shachtmanite Independent Socialist League but had refused to follow it in joining the Socialist Party, split from the swp. The first to be expelled was a faction led by James Robertson, and they formed what was first called the Spartacist Group. Shortly afterward another faction headed by Tim Wohlforth was also expelled from the swp and established what it first called the American Committee for the Fourth International, and which subsequently became the Workers League.

Both the Robertson and Wohlforth groups had been in contact with the International Committee, and particularly with Gerry Healy, during their factional fight within the Socialist Workers Party. Even in that

period, however, the future Spartacists had developed certain tactical differences with Healy and the ic.

Subsequent to the expulsion of both groups from the Socialist Workers Party there were attempts by the International Committee to get them to join forces. To this end, Gerry Healy met in Montreal with representatives of both groups, and it was agreed that for the time being both factions would be associated with the ic.¹

Subsequently it was reported by the International Committee that after the Montreal meeting "discussion between the two groups and a certain amount of political activity were carried out and a delegation from both groups was sent as observers to the International Conference." It added that "in the intervening period Robertson and his group published some International Committee material and claimed to stand on the positions of the International Committee."²

The Spartacist Group was represented at the Third Conference of the International Committee in London in April 1966. James Robertson presented a substantial critique of the proposed program of the ic which clearly was not well received by those controlling the meeting. After a clash at the following session of the conference the Spartacist Group was excluded from the International Committee and the rival American Committee for the Fourth International was recognized as the American section of the ic.

The Third Conference then adopted a "Statement . . . on the Robertson Group . . ." which, among other things said, "Since the Spartacist group has in the past claimed to adhere to the positions of the International Committee it must be categorically stated that the International Committee not only dissociates itself from the activities and publications of the Spartacist group but insists that a Marxist party can be built only in opposition to it. . . ."³

With their expulsion from the International Committee, the Spartacist Group,

which soon became the Spartacist League, was left in more or less total isolation internationally. It remained thus for several years.

It was not until the early 1970s that a New Zealander, Bill Logan, got in touch with the American Spartacists and set about establishing a Spartacist organization there. Logan subsequently moved to Australia and the organization became the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand, although in fact almost all of its members were in Australia after Logan shifted his base of operations there. By the late 1970s the ist had shifted Logan to Great Britain, where he played a major role in organizing the group in that country. Logan was subsequently purged by the ist international leadership.⁴

With the outbreak of the internal conflict within the United Secretariat in 1969 the Spartacists saw an opportunity for possibly establishing some European organizations. In 1970 James Robertson and two other Spartacists visited Europe and established contacts with some disillusioned USEC members. Subsequently small Spartacist groups were organized in Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, and Austria.⁵

In July 1974 the Spartacist groups in the United States and Australia issued a "Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency." It began: "The Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand and the Spartacist League of the United States declare themselves to be the nucleus for the early crystalization of an international Trotskyist tendency upon the 1966 Declaration of Principles and dedicated to the rebirth of the Fourth International."⁶ An "appendix" to this declaration "established an interim organizational structure for the tendency, with the combined Central Committees of the full sections (initially United States and Australia/New Zealand) constituted as an International Executive Committee (IEC) with an International Secretariat as its resident executive arm."⁷

It was not until the summer of 1979 that the first international conference of the international Spartacist tendency was held, in Great Britain. It was reported that "voting delegates attended from the Spartacist League/U.S., Spartacist League of Australia/New Zealand, Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands, Spartacist League of Britain, Ligue Trotskyste de France, and Trotskyist League of Canada. . . . Also attending were three representatives of the Revolutionary Workers Party of Ceylon (RWP), a small Ceylonese left-centrist current headed by veteran Sinhalese Trotskyist Edmund Samarakkody, and nine members of the Lega Trotskysta d'Italia, a grouping of very youthful Pabloist-derived militants."

The report on this meeting noted that the average age of the delegates was "over 29" and "political history averaged nearly five years in the ist and seven and a half years in organized leftist politics, from a wide variety of political backgrounds. There were former members of the pro-Moscow (U.S., France, Austria), pro-Peking (U.S., Canada, Germany) and 'Eurocommunist' type (Australia) Stalinists and of various social-democratic organizations. . . ."⁸

The Spartacists clearly hoped to recruit Edmund Samarakkody and his Ceylonese faction into their new international grouping. It was noted that "the second conference day had been allocated to discussion of a proposal of fusion between the ist and the Ceylonese RWP. However, the political conduct of the RWP delegates during the camp/conference and their abrupt departure had already made the outcome a foregone conclusion." The Spartacists finally claimed that Samarakkody and his RWP were "an encysted national left-centrist clot."⁹

An elected International Executive Committee was chosen at this conference.¹⁰ However, no further international conference of the group seems to have taken place by 1985.

The international Spartacist tendency held distinctly different positions from

International Workers League (Fourth International)

those of other international Trotskyist factions. With the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and the advent of the regime of the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979, the Spartacists adopted the slogan, "Down with the Shah, Down with the Mullahs." Later in the same year the Spartacists supported the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, their American periodical *Spartacist* carrying the front-page headline, "Hail Red Army," also published in the German version of *Spartacist*.¹¹ With the advent of the Solidarity movement in Poland the Spartacists denounced that labor organization, which other Trotskyist groups hailed as the embodiment of the "political revolution" which they had been advocating in the Stalinist states since the time of Leon Trotsky himself. The American Spartacists published a pamphlet entitled *Solidarnosc: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers*.

In the early 1980s the international Spartacist tendency suffered a schism. Small groups from their affiliates in the United States, Canada, and Germany broke away to form what they called the External Tendency (ET) of the international Spartacist tendency. Although both sides engaged in a good deal of invective against each other, the "principled" basis of this split remained somewhat obscure. Certainly one of the issues was what the dissidents saw as the overly Stalinist tilt of the ist.¹²

A faction of International Trotskyism led by the Argentine Hugo Bressano (better known by his pseudonym, Nahuel Moreno) had been of some consequence in the movement since the 1950s. However, it was not until the early 1980s that that element of the movement was formally established as a major tendency within International Trotskyism.

Moreno first rallied support among the Latin American Trotskyists for the International Committee during the 1950s, and subsequently for the United Secretariat of the Fourth International after 1963. Within USEC Moreno and his followers sided with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States during the 1970s, in opposition to making guerrilla warfare the principal strategy of that faction of the movement. But Moreno was dissatisfied with the terms by which that ideological conflict was ended and organized his own Bolshevik Tendency within the United Secretariat.

The Bolshevik Tendency also developed differences with the rest of USEC on the question of Cuba. In December 1978 the Morenoites urged that the Castro regime should be categorized as a "bureaucratized workers state," rather than just a "workers state" without any adjective, which was the United Secretariat's position at the time.¹

Break of Bolshevik Tendency with United Secretariat

The complete break with the United Secretariat by the Bolshevik Tendency (together with the small Leninist Trotskyist Ten-

dency) came in the August-October 1979 period over the issue of the attitude the United Secretariat should adopt towards the Nicaraguan Revolution. The split came about as a consequence of the organization in June 1979 by the Moreno forces (particularly from Colombia) of the so-called Simón Bolívar Brigade to help the last offensive of the Sandinista rebels against the Somoza regime.

Apparently, although a few individual members of the Simón Bolívar Brigade arrived in time to fight during the last days of the Nicaraguan civil war, most of the recruits did not get there until after the Sandinista victory on July 19. Once there they began recruiting supporters and were particularly active in working within the trade union movement in Managua.

On August 15 members of the Brigade organized a demonstration of some 3,000 workers in Managua. According to *Time*, the workers were "discontented with the projects of the government for construction of a mixed economy, incorporating public and private firms," and demanded "compensation for the wages lost during the revolution."² Reportedly they carried signs with such slogans as "The revolution is in the hands of the bourgeoisie," and "Power to the proletariat."³

The new Nicaraguan revolutionary government reacted violently against this action of the Simón Bolívar Brigade. Forty non-Nicaraguans were deported from the country to Panama, where they were reportedly badly beaten by the police of the regime of General Omar Torrijos before being allowed to return home.⁴ At the same time, members of the United Secretariat's "sympathizing" section in Nicaragua, the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria, were jailed.⁵

Soon after this incident a delegation of the United Secretariat—consisting of Manuel Aguilar, Jean-Pierre Beauvais, Hugo Blanco, Charles-Andre Udry, Pedro Camejo, and Barry Shephard (the last two from the Socialist Workers Party)—presented a statement

to the leaders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). It said:

To defend this revolution means to support the struggle whose vanguard is the FSLN. All activities which seek today to create divisions between the mobilized masses and the FSLN are contrary to the interests of the revolution. This was the case, specifically, with the activities of the Simón Bolívar Brigade. This group actually had a dual policy: to capitalize on the prestige of the FSLN, it cloaked itself with the Sandinista banner; but at the same time, in the mass organizations its sectarian policy tried to separate the workers from their vanguard. According to certain assertions that have appeared in the press, the activities of this group represented the attitude of our organization toward the revolution and its leadership. This is totally false. This group acted on its own.⁶

Apparently there were some doubts within the USEC majority about such a categorical endorsement of the Sandinista government and condemnation of USEC's Nicaraguan affiliate. *Rouge*, the periodical of the French section, commented that "the terms in which the government of Nicaragua decreed the expulsion of the "foreign" militants constitutes a disquieting precedent."⁷ The International Marxist Group, the British section, held at the time that the Sandinistas were "playing a class-collaborationist role."⁸

At the end of September a meeting of the United Secretariat had the Nicaraguan situation as the main topic of discussion. The majority at that meeting passed a resolution which warned against "precipitous flight toward ultraleftism" and against any attempt "to force in an adventurous way the class struggle." It also called on each USEC member in Nicaragua to work "as a loyal militant of the organization which led the overthrow of Somoza," that is, the Sandinista Front. It condemned the Simón Bolívar Brigade and

ordered the Bolshevik Faction to end its existence as a "public fraction."

Moreno and his supporters introduced a minority motion which condemned USEC's failure to support its own section when it was suppressed by the Sandinista regime. It said that the Bolshevik Faction "rejects these measures which violated the rules of democratic centralism" and called on its members to "prevent the holding of an anti-democratic world congress," that is, the USEC Eleventh Congress scheduled for a few weeks later.⁹

Negotiations With the Lambertist Tendency

Right after this meeting of the United Secretariat, representatives of the Bolshevik Faction and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency had a private meeting with leaders of the Lambertist organization. A subsequent announcement of this meeting said that it endorsed the Simón Bolívar Brigade and all those who were trying "to help the masses develop their own organizations."¹⁰

Subsequently, on October 29, the three groups issued a joint statement endorsing the Simón Bolívar Brigade, lamenting that the European USEC leaders had gone along with the SWP's total endorsement of the Sandinista regime, and arguing that "clarification of positions" was required among all those who claimed to participate in the Trotskyist tradition. This statement said that the three groups "call in common upon all organizations which support the founding program of the IV International . . . to prepare an open conference, to discuss and answer these problems with the objective of reuniting or reconstructing . . . all of the world Trotskyist movement as it has been defined above. The USEC evidently has a place in the preparation and holding of such a conference. To prepare politically and organizationally this conference, the Organization Committee for the Reconstruction of the IV International, the Bolshevik Faction

and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency constitute a parity committee."¹¹

The first session of the Parity Commission took place in February 1980. Among other moves it named Nahuel Moreno to prepare an "anteproject" for a "thesis" which would constitute the basic statement of the new version of the Fourth International which the participating groups proposed to establish. At the second meeting of the Parity Commission a committee consisting of Moreno, Pierre Lambert, Christian Nemo, Stephane Just, and L. Favre was appointed to draw up a final document, based on that of Moreno.

At the third meeting of the Parity Commission the basic thesis was adopted for submission to a world congress called for December 1980. The third session also decided to issue a new trimesteral review, *Correspondencia Internacional—La Verdad*, to publish documents of the Parity Commission and news about the various national sections associated with it. It also decided that the name to be adopted at the December world congress would be IV International (International Committee).¹²

Establishment of International Workers League (Fourth International)

As had been planned, in December 1980 the Parity Commission was converted into the Fourth International (International Committee). However, the alliance between the Morenoists and the Lambertists did not last. Sharp differences arose between the two groups about details of organizing a proposed "open conference." There were also factional struggles between supporters of the two tendencies within the national sections associated with the new international group. The upshot was that on December 11, 1981, the Moreno faction broke with the Lambertists and issued a call for an "International Meeting of Consultation" for January 5, 1982.¹³

The principal more or less programmatic

issue which was raised by the Morenoists preceding this split was their accusation that the French PCI had followed a "Popular Front" policy in supporting election of François Mitterrand, the Socialist Party presidential candidate, in 1981. However, people on the Lambertist side felt that Moreno was particularly afraid that in a united world organization he might lose the influence he had obtained during the previous years over the Latin American Trotskyist groups.¹⁴

The International Consultative Conference held in Bogotá, Colombia, was reportedly attended by fifty people, of whom twenty were full-fledged delegates. Each organization was represented by one delegate and all decisions of the meeting were unanimous. The meeting proclaimed the creation of the International Workers League (Fourth International) and declared itself the Extraordinary Founding Conference of that organization.

An International Executive Committee of the new group was chosen. The representation on this body by country was: Argentina three, Brazil two, and one each for Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Central America, United States, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. A three-member Control Commission was also established.¹⁵

Undoubtedly the main strength of the International Workers League (Fourth International) was in Latin America. The Argentine Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (subsequently renamed Movimiento a Socialismo [MAS]) was undoubtedly one of the largest Trotskyist national groups. The IWL(FI) also had national sections of some consequence in Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, and Mexico. In mid-1982 it also had affiliates in Uruguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras. In the United States it had organized a small group. Its principal European affiliate was the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores of Spain, although it also had small groups in Portugal, France, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Greece.¹⁶

In March 1985 the IWL(FI) held its Second World Congress in Paris. It was reported that there were twenty-one different delegations as well as observers from the French Lutte Ouvrière and groups in other countries associated with it. A report on the meeting said that "the main goals of the World Congress of the IWL(FI) were to analyze the *Theses on the World Political Situation* prepared by the international leadership and discussed in all of the affiliate sections, review the activities of the International over the last three years . . . lay out the general tactics for the period ahead . . . and approve a series of resolutions and a Manifesto of the IWL(FI)."

This same report summed up the "Theses" adopted by the meeting: "there is a revolutionary situation developing throughout the world. Massive mobilizations are shaking every continent. The traditional leadership of the working class and the masses that for decades has acted to hold back mobilizations is losing strength. New revolutionary forces opposed to the Holy Alliance of Washington, the Kremlin, the Vatican, the Second International, the ruling bourgeoisie throughout the world, and the traditional left are emerging."

This summary continued, "The main tasks of revolutionary socialists, therefore, is to build strong revolutionary parties with the goal of gaining mass influence and at the same time work to build a Revolutionary United Front with those forces that are breaking with or opposed to the Holy Alliance. This means finding ways to work with those revolutionary forces willing to fight together under a struggle program . . ."

A number of separate resolutions were also adopted. These dealt with disarmament, Nicaragua, Central America, Poland, Bolivia, South Africa, the British miners' strike, Lebanon, New Caledonia, and the foreign debt. A new International Executive Committee was also elected.¹⁷

Iranian Trotskyism

A Trotskyist movement developed in Iran for the first time in the wake of the 1979 Revolution. Three competing Trotskyist parties soon emerged, all of which were fraternally represented in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. No other faction of International Trotskyism appears to have succeeded in establishing a group in the country. As the Islamic theocratic regime consolidated its hold on power the Iranian Trotskyist movement proved to be short-lived, its public activities continuing for at most four years.

Evolution of the Iranian Revolutionary Regime

The Shah left Iran late in January 1979 and the Bakhtiar government which he had left in power fell shortly afterward, when substantial elements of the armed forces defected. Ayatollah Khomeini, who had led the fight of Islamic fundamentalist elements against the Shah's regime, first inside Iran and then from abroad, and whose voice was known to the Moslem faithful throughout the country from taped speeches and appeals which had been smuggled into Iran and broadcast in mosques all over the nation as the crisis of the Shah's government intensified, emerged as virtually the only leader of the post-Shah regime.

Although the movement against the Shah had involved the widest range of political tendencies—Western-oriented liberals, pro-Soviet and pro-Maoist Stalinists, and Trotskyists, as well as diverse Moslem elements—it was the orthodox Shiite fundamentalist Islamic current led by Khomeini which quickly emerged as the dominant element in the Iranian Revolution. It imposed a new "Islamic republic," established a dra-

conian system of justice, decreed that all women should wear Moslem clothing which covered them from the top of their heads to their ankles, and established loyalty to fundamentalist Islam as interpreted by the high clergy as the orthodoxy of the Revolution.

Late in 1980 border conflicts with Iraq exploded into a major military conflict when the Iraqi government of President Saddam Hussein launched a full-scale invasion of Iran with the evident hope of overthrowing the Khomeini regime. That war, which went on for almost a decade, complicated the Revolution and greatly increased the difficulties of the Iranian national economy.

The major internal political crisis of the Khomeini regime came in the summer of 1981. In June Khomeini forced out of office President Abu al-Hassan Bani Sadr, and turned over power within the regime completely to the mullah-dominated Islamic Republican Party (IRP). At the same time, the left-wing Moslem but anticlerical Mujahedeen movement, which had provided many of the shock troops of the Revolution, declared itself "at war" with the Khomeini government, to which the regime replied with thousand of arrests and widespread summary executions. Shortly afterward Bani Sadr and top leaders of the Mujahedeen fled abroad to continue the fight against Khomeini from Paris, from whence he himself had led the successful struggle against the Shah.

The Emergence of Trotskyism

The first Trotskyist group to appear in Iran was the Socialist Workers Party (HKS). For a few months it was the only such organization, but there soon appeared the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), and subsequently dissidents from the HKS and HKE joined forces to establish the Workers Unity Party (HVK).

The three groups drew their leadership from somewhat different sources. The HKS,

particularly after it split, tended to be led by students who had returned to Iran from Great Britain; it was aligned principally with the European leadership of USEC, and became strongly opposed to the Khomeini government. The HKE was led mainly by students and young intellectuals who had returned from the United States, tended to align itself with the Socialist Workers Party of the U.S., and gave critical support to the Khomeini regime. The HVK drew its leadership from elements of both the older groups and had a position less hostile to Khomeini than the HKS but less friendly than the HKE.¹

At the November 1979 Eleventh Congress of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the resolution on "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International," devoted considerable space to the situation in Iran. One passage in that resolution proclaimed: "In the long run there are only two possible outcomes: either the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry, which alone can guarantee the victory of the revolution, or the victory of the counterrevolution. The main obstacle on the road to the victory of the revolution is the weakness of the subjective factors, the leadership and class consciousness of the proletariat and toiling masses. There is no revolutionary mass party in Iran."²

As in the statements of the Iranian Trotskyists in that same period there was little reference to the Moslem clerical nature of the Iranian revolution in USEC's document.

The Socialist Workers Party—HKS

Before the departure of the Shah and the triumph of the Iranian Revolution there already existed a Trotskyist group among Iranian exiles and expatriates, the Sattar League, which was a sympathizing organization of the United Secretariat.³ On at least one occasion, the Shah's regime distributed widely a denunciation of this organization and of the Committee for Artistic and Intel-

lectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI), through which it worked, as part of a general attack on the imperial government's left-wing opponents.⁴

The formation in Iran of the Socialist Workers Party (HKS), which was in fact the transformation of the Sattar League into the new organization, was announced on January 22, 1979, shortly after the departure of the Shah, at a news conference in the Intercontinental Hotel in Tehran. This session was attended not only by local newsmen but also by correspondent, from the London *Daily Mail*, Swedish Broadcasting, CBS, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Newsweek*, the London *Daily Telegraph*, and several other European dailies. Those who spoke for the new party were Professor Zeyott Obrohimi of Tehran University; Reza Baraheni, a former prisoner of the Shah's regime just returned from exile in the United States; Babak Zahraie, "editor of the socialist opposition weekly *Payam Daneshjoo*"; Javad Sadeeg, a writer who had been in exile ever since the restoration of the Shah in 1953; Parvin Najafi, a woman who was "a frequent writer for *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*"; and Nehamat Jazayeri, ex-executive secretary of the CAIFI.

Babak Zahraie summed up the demands being put forward by the Socialist Workers Party:

We demand U.S. imperialism hands off the Iranian revolution. We are for nationalizing all foreign holdings, basic industry, and the banks and placing them under workers control. We demand full equality for women in Iran. Iran's oppressed nationalities—the Azerbaijanis, Kurds, and Baluchis—should have the right to their own languages and complete control of their own affairs. The land should belong to whoever works it. There should be easy credit for the peasants. We are for full rights for the soldiers. We are for opening the books of the big corporations and the government and ending the huge expendi-

tures for arms, turning that money over to social benefits for the people. Finally, we believe that to solve the problems faced by the Iranian people, we need a workers and peasants government.⁵

One of the first activities of the Socialist Workers party was the wide distribution of two documents elaborating on the party's positions. One of these was entitled "Bill of Rights for the Workers and Toilers of Iran," the other, "For a Constituent Assembly to Decide the Issues Facing Iran!"

The first of these documents, after tracing the roots of the current Iranian Revolution to the constitutional revolution of the first decade of the century, elaborated on a number of the party's positions. Emphasizing the need for a constituent assembly, it also argued that "local governments must be made up of representatives democratically elected by the organizations of the workers, peasants, white-collar workers, soldiers, university students, and high school students. The all-Iran government must be made up of representatives of these organizations chosen on an all-Iran basis with the voluntary collaboration of representatives of the oppressed nationalities."

This document also called for "unity of workers and peasants and a land reform." Under this heading it demanded that "the lands and property of the big landowners and the model farms must be confiscated without payment of any compensation and distributed among the poor peasants, or else be placed under the control of the agricultural workers in the form of cooperatives or collective farms. The program for nationalizing agriculture and putting it on a cooperative basis should be designed so as to remove any possibility of the small peasant being expropriated and forced to join cooperatives. Until they recognize the possibility and need for taking another path, the small peasants will continue to hold their own plots of land."⁶

The document on the constituent assem-

bly called for universal suffrage including the right to vote for high school students and illiterates. It demanded "proportional representation on a nationwide basis. Only in this way will all political groups, even those with a relatively small percentage of the vote nationwide, be able to make their voices heard."⁷

Neither of these statements dealt with the role of the Moslem clergy and other fanatical religionists in the struggle against the Shah, and in the situation following his overthrow. However, the fact was that virtually from its inception the HKS came into sharp conflict with these elements. At the time of the HKS's first public meeting in Tehran on March 2, 1979, with 2,000 people gathered to hear the Trotskyists' speeches, they were forced to suspend the gathering in the face of a threat by Islamic students, and some Maoists, to break it up.⁸

At the same time the more liberal elements in the entourage of Ayatollah Khomeini showed a willingness to deal with the Trotskyists as a legitimate current in the Revolution. As a consequence, on April 11, 1979, Abu al-Hassan Bani Sadr, then one of the major spokesmen of the Khomeini regime, engaged in a television debate with Babak Zahraie, editor of the weekly HKS paper *Kargar* (*Worker*). It was claimed that twenty-two million people throughout Iran watched and listened to the debate. Zahraie insisted on the need for a workers and peasants government, for expropriation of foreign-owned enterprises and a land reform, and for the introduction of a planned economy.⁹

On May 30 there was another debate between Bani Sadr and Babak Zahraie. This one took place at the Teachers Institute in Tehran and was said to have been attended by 70,000 people.¹⁰

In May 1979, when one of the leading clerics of the regime, Ayatollah Motahari, was assassinated, the HKS expressed its abhorrence of the deed. Its official statement claimed: "The terrorist attack on Ayatollah

Motahari was a counterrevolutionary act. It was an act against the toilers. The consequences of it can only be harmful to their interests. . . . Basing itself on the tradition of revolutionary Marxism, the Socialist Workers Party condemns all forms of individual terror as an obstacle to a conscious struggle by the workers and all the oppressed for socialism. Reaffirming this historic position, we deplore the assassination of Ayatollah Motahari and express our sorrow at his death."¹¹

The Socialist Workers Party participated in the first elections held by the post-Shah regime, for a so-called Assembly of Experts. Among its nominees was the only soldier to run in the election as well as two people in the province of Khuzistan who had to campaign from jail.¹²

The HKS also participated in the parliamentary elections of March 14, 1980. It was reported as "calling for a workers and socialist united front in the elections and has offered to help workers committees presenting independent candidates in the elections." A statement by the party proclaimed: "By our participation in the elections and by presenting and explaining the action program of the toilers, which contains our program for the struggle and for solving the present crisis in the society, we will do our best to forge the militant unity of workers and toilers, and to mobilize their independent nationwide action."¹³

During the early months of the existence of the HKS it was particularly active among the Arab workers in the province of Khuzistan, the major center of the country's oil industry. It was in that area that the party first ran into serious conflict with the Khomeini regime and the Islamic elements which were its principal support.

After a series of strikes and demonstrations in Khuzistan the government carried out an extensive roundup of workers from the oil and steel industries of the province and other political dissidents of various kinds in the area. Among these were nine

members of the HKS, who were arrested on May 30, 1979, and seven more who were picked up on the following day. On August 25, fourteen of the Trotskyists were secretly tried by the local "Imam's Committee" without being allowed to have a lawyer or even to defend themselves before the "tribunal." Twelve of those on trial were sentenced to death, and two others to life imprisonment on charges such as "participation in anti-Islamic and anti-popular activities," "criticism of the central government for being undemocratic," and "dissemination of 'poisonous ideas.'" However, the executions were suspended as a consequence of intervention of the Tehran authorities.¹⁴

The International Trotskyist movement mounted a worldwide campaign of protest against the sentences and demanded the release of the HKS members. Among those who contacted the Iranian authorities on behalf of the Trotskyist prisoners were political and trade union leaders from many European and Latin American countries, as well as from the United States and Australia.¹⁵ There were also protests and demonstrations within Iran, with the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party finally coming out in defense of the Trotskyists. Ultimately, most of those arrested between May 30 and June 7, 1979 were released.¹⁶

It is not clear whether any of the Trotskyists arrested in May-June 1979 were ever executed. However, by mid-1982, two Trotskyists, one of whom was an oil worker, had been killed by the Khomeini regime, and a large number were in jail.¹⁷

During this period, the HKS generated relatively extensive impact. James Bill has noted that "during 1979 [the HKS] exhibited considerably more influence and appeal in Iran than did the Tudeh Party."¹⁸ However, in the following year, he noted that HKS recruitment "in lower classes . . . has been difficult because of the strong influence of Shiite religious leaders among the masses." However, he added: "Despite this and the

relative newness of the organization, this party exhibited intellectual dynamism and a growing appeal among the intelligentsia as the latter became increasingly disenchanted with the religious domination of the revolution."¹⁹

In spite of persecution the HKS continued to function for some time. It became increasingly critical of the Khomeini regime. At the time of the first meeting of the "parliament" of the regime, the Islamic Consultative Assembly, in June 1980, the HKS periodical *Che Bayad Kard (What Is To Be Done)* attacked it as "an assembly in which the majority of the representatives do not represent the will of the people, but who have been imposed upon them through the force of reaction and who are pawns in the hands of the autocratic rulers." In that same article the HKS paper, although supporting the occupation of the American Embassy and the holding of its personnel as hostages, questioned whether these moves were "real anti-imperialism":

Real anti-imperialism means rebuilding the national economy to benefit the toilers and workers, the establishment of a planned economy and the severing of Iran's links to the world capitalist market, the expropriation of all big capitalists, the establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade, the establishment of control over production through workers councils, and a thorough revolution in the countryside and the establishment of control over agriculture by peasants councils . . . Real struggle against imperialism means the removal of all censorship, and stopping the autocratic control of the clergy over radio and tv, the press, theater, and cinema; the abrogation of declaring music and other arts forbidden; encouraging materially and morally the development of all artistic aptitudes without clerical supervision; increasing the budget of the ministry of education, and increasing the number of schools and higher education facilities not the closing down of all

schools and the massacre of militant anti-imperialist students.²⁰

When Iraqi troops invaded Iran the HKS rallied to support of the Iranian cause in the conflict. The HKS fortnightly *Kargar-e-Socialist* carried the party's statement which began: "The Iraqi Baathist regime, which has been plotting against the Iranian revolution since the overthrow of the Shah and staging various attacks, has now launched an extensive military assault on our country. . . . We demand that the government of the Islamic Republic give us arms! We demand that the army and the Revolutionary Guards give us military training!" This statement ended with the slogans, "A united mobilization against the military intrigues of imperialism! The leaders of the Islamic republic must arm the working people!"²¹

By late 1981 the Iranian Socialist Workers Party was frankly in favor of ousting the Khomeini regime. In an interview with a British Trotskyist periodical a leader of the party stated: "We are for the overthrow of the regime and for socialist revolution. It is possible that the civil war will provide an opportunity for overthrowing Khomeini." Although critical of the Mujahedeen, the left-wing Islamic group which was engaged in conflict with the Khomeini government because "they explicitly support capitalism," this HKS leader added: "We say that if they come to power by overthrowing Khomeini this would open up big opportunities for open activity by the workers and left-wing organizations, and nationalities and so on. It would also boost the chances to develop a mass working class or revolutionary organization in Iran. In that sense we would fight alongside them to prevent any right-wing inspired military coup that the royalists outside the country might support."²²

The Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE)

Within a year of the formation of the Socialist Workers Party a number of its leaders

and members had broken away to establish a second Iranian Trotskyist organization, the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE). This new organization continued to publish the newspaper *Kargar*, which originally had been the organ of the Socialist Workers Party. The paper was officially legalized in April 1980.²³

At about the same time that the HKE was established there was also organized an associated youth group, the Young Socialists. Its main membership was among the students.²⁴

The line of the HKE towards the Khomeini regime was substantially different from that of the HKS. The orientation of the HKE, which was led principally by people who had spent their exile in the United States, is probably reflected by an article in *Intercontinental Press*, a periodical of the SWP of the U.S., with which those HKE leaders were associated during their years abroad. This article, published about the time that the HKE was being formed, discussed the way in which the Moslem religion had been a focus for the resistance to the regime of the Shah, noted that "Khomeini's popularity stems from his resolute anti-Shah and anti-imperialist stand," and concluded that "the people who are being slandered every day in the capitalist media as religious fanatics are just working people like ourselves trying to organize to advance their interests and win a better life."²⁵

One of the earliest activities of the HKE was to participate in the parliamentary elections of March 14, 1980. The party ran eight candidates in five different cities. One of these nominees in Tehran was Babak Zahraie.²⁶ In addition the new party supported a number of working-class candidates who ran as independents.²⁷

Soon after its establishment the HKE became involved in a polemic with the Stalinist Tudeh Party. In addition to exchanges between the Tudeh paper *Mardom* and *Kargar*, Babak Zahraie wrote to Ayatollah Mosavi Ardebil, Prosecutor of the Islamic Republic, and "brought charges for slander

against Bur-el-din Kianuri, the general secretary of the Tudeh Party and against the Tudeh Party Central Committee."²⁸

Another early activity of the HKE was a campaign in support of the Turkomen ethnic group, some of whose leaders had been murdered by "unknown" people. *Kargar* demanded of the government the establishment of an official commission of inquiry into these assassinations.²⁹ At the same time the HKE strongly supported the struggle of the Kurdish population for self-determination and cultural autonomy.³⁰

During the early months of 1980 the Islamic Student Organizations began to seize control of a number of university campuses and to demand a "cultural" revolution to get rid of alleged remnants of the Shah's regime still existing there. The HKE expressed very strong support for this move, and "strongly denounced the role of the capitalists in creating the confrontations and attempting to distort and misrepresent the intentions of the Islamic students. And the socialists strongly denounced the government's order banning political groups from the campuses."³¹

When, on May Day 1980, President Abu al-Hassan Bani Sadr called his regime "a government of working people," the HKE replied by listing the measures which a "real" government of working people would take and which "the majority of the people" wanted. These were "a total cutting off of the influence of U.S. imperialism through the nationalization of all imperialist property in Iran . . . a solution of the land question in the interests of the great majority of poor peasants . . . the creation of the army of twenty million to defend the revolution . . . an end to the bloodshed in Kurdistan . . . the country to be reorganized in the interests of the broad masses of deprived and oppressed people."³²

In spite of these somewhat critical attitudes towards certain actions of the Khomeini regime the HKE clearly sought to play down the importance of the clerical nature of the regime, or even to adapt to it, in sharp

contrast to the attitude of those Trotskyists who had remained in the Socialist Workers Party. There are many examples of this during the years of the existence of the Revolutionary Workers Party.

Thus, at the end of May 1980 *Kargar* wrote very favorably of the work of the Islamic "Imam's Committee" in a neighborhood of Tehran to "raise production" and "defend the revolution" in that area.³³ When in the summer of 1980 the Revolutionary Council of the Khomeini government decreed that all women had to wear Islamic dress in government offices, *Kargar* carried an interview with Maheha Hashemi (one of the Trotskyists who had been jailed the year before), in which she was asked, "If the majority in the society decides that women must wear Islamic dress, will the Revolutionary Workers Party ask women to accept this?" to which she replied, "The answer is definitely yes. The Revolutionary Workers Party is convinced that in such circumstances it will quickly become clear that the question is not whether women should or should not wear Islamic dress, but that the real question is the rights of women and the struggle of the entire society against American imperialism."³⁴

The HKE vehemently supported the seizure of the U.S. Embassy and the subsequent holding of hostages. It adopted the "Den of Spies" reference to the embassy which was used by Khomeini and the "students" who had seized the building and its occupants. It strongly opposed any compromise with the United States on the issue, arguing that those in the Khomeini regime who opposed the continuing imprisonment of the hostages "look more and more like an anti-imperialist current devoid of any real content."³⁵

About a year later, in April 1981, the HKE participated enthusiastically in a celebration of Women's Day on the anniversary of the birth of Mohammed's daughter Hazrat Fatima. A statement by the party on April 22 addressed to "Muslim and militant sisters"

began: "At present thousands of Iranian women are preparing to celebrate Women's Day, the anniversary of the birth of Hazrat Fatima, in a magnificent way." The statement argued that "the Iranian revolution has opened the way for women's emancipation from the yoke of thousands of years of oppression. The revolution has demonstrated that the secret of victory for women in achieving their just demands lies in independent organization and the mobilization of women in their millions." The statement ended, "The HKE and Young Socialists welcome the April 25 women's demonstration and call upon all militant and toiling people to actively take part in the preparation of this day to make it as broad as possible."³⁶

The attitude of the HKE toward the uprising of the Mujahedeen against the clergy-controlled government in June 1981 was markedly different from that of the HKS. Its position was reflected in an article in *Intercontinental Press* by Janice Lynn. She wrote:

The Mujahedeen and groups with similar views have little or no confidence in the Iranian working class and instead join forces with the 'secular-liberal' bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois forces around Bani-Sadr. They support this liberal wing of the bourgeois government as a lesser evil to the IRP wing of the government. . . . This declaration of armed struggle against the government and the revolution is a suicidal course which completely leaves out any perspective of organizing the working class around its concerns. . . . It plays right into the hands of imperialism and its counterrevolutionary agents who are intent on overthrowing the revolution.³⁷

At the time of the suppression of the Stalinist Tudeh Party by the Khomeini regime in December 1983 the HKE protested this action. In their note of protest, however, they conceded that "the charges against them seem completely logical and natural

to popular opinion and particularly to militant Muslims."³⁸

Its continuing support, however critical, of the Khomeini regime did not prevent that regime from indulging in extensive harassment and persecution of the HKE. As early as September 1980 one of the party's principal leaders, Nemat Jazayeri, was arrested by officials of the Central Revolutionary Committee.³⁹ He was not released until March 1981, and his freeing coincided with the dismissal of a number of key working-class figures of the HKE from their jobs in government-seized industries.⁴⁰ At the time of the Mujahedeen uprising in June-July 1981, when over 1,000 people were arrested and at least 150 executed, there were at least two HKE members among those jailed.⁴¹

In April 1982 *Intercontinental Press* reported: "The Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) . . . has been coming under increasing harassment by the Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor's office in recent weeks." Many copies of *Kargar* were confiscated on orders of the prosecutor, and the printer of the paper was arrested. An HKE attempt on March 12 to hold a public meeting to commemorate the first nationalization of the oil industry in 1951 was prevented by the prosecutor.⁴² On March 26, 1981, the Islamic Revolutionary Court declared *Kargar* illegal.⁴³

Nonetheless, the HKE continued its policy of "critical support" of the regime. In August 1982, when Iranian troops moved into Iraqi territory for the first time, the Central Committee of the HKE adopted a resolution about the event. Among other things this document claimed: "Since the Islamic Republic is a capitalist regime whose point of departure is not the interests of the toilers, it always creates obstacles for the defense of the revolution and its extension. Therefore, while struggling decisively against the aggression of Saddam's army under the military leadership of the Islamic Republic government the proletariat continues to maintain its own political independence in

this stage of the war. It puts forward its own revolutionary program against the capitalist government and politicians."⁴⁴

In December 1982 the HKE ran four candidates in parliamentary byelections in several parts of the country.⁴⁵ The Iranian government's severe persecution of the HKE continued and by the end of 1983 many of the party's leading figures were in jail. Babak Zahraie had been held in prison for a year without the right to see visitors or receive mail. Among the other HKE leaders incarcerated were Bahram Ali Atai and Mohammed Bagher Falsafe, who had been arrested in March 1982.⁴⁶

The Workers Unity Party (HKV)

The third Iranian Trotskyist party was established at a convention in January 1981 attended by about sixty former members of the HKE and HKS. This was the first national convention of Iranian Trotskyists to be held. The new Workers Unity Party began immediately to publish a newspaper *Hemmat (Determination)*, edited by Mahmoud Sayrafizadeh, who had been the candidate of the HKE in the 1980 presidential election.⁴⁷

The founding convention of the Workers Unity Party adopted a long Political Theses document. This was apparently the first such overall analysis of the role of Trotskyism in the Iranian Revolution to be adopted by any of the three organizations.

This document began by analyzing at some length the evolution of the Iranian Revolution, in which particular emphasis was put upon the spontaneous emergence of "shoras" or committees among workers, peasants, students, and other groups during the first phase of the Revolution. Perhaps, given the nature of the leadership of the Revolution which had emerged immediately with the return to Iran of Ayatollah Khomeini, this section was most notable for the fact that it made virtually no reference to the role which had been played by the Islamic clergy or by Khomeini himself.

Rather, the document consistently refers to the Islamic Republican government merely as a "capitalist" regime. The Theses then defined the attitude of the new Trotskyist party toward the Khomeini regime (again without mentioning the regime's leaders): "From a working-class viewpoint, the present bourgeois-democratic government is a 'lesser evil' than a dictatorial government which is an imperialist puppet. Until the working class is powerful enough to replace the capitalist government with a government of workers and peasants, it must defend this government, and especially its own position and existence under it, against conspiracies and attacks by the imperialists."

The Theses then argued that the key to a victory for a "government of workers and peasants . . . lies in resolving the crisis of leadership of the working class, that is, building the combat party of the Iranian proletariat. The existing revolutionary crisis in our society . . . shows that the greatest obstacle facing the growth and extension of the socialist revolution is the absence of a revolutionary working-class leadership, that is, a mass Leninist party."

As the only party "armed with a political program which shows the road to victory for the working class and all the oppressed," the Theses insisted that "the central task facing the party is the turn towards the industrial working class, consistent activity in the factories, full proletarianization, accumulation and training of working-class cadres, and establishing roots in the working class . . ." Together with this was the need for "activity and recruitment by the Young Socialists." Finally, in terms of the party and its tasks the Theses stressed that it was part of an international organization: "Building the Fourth International is one of the central tasks of our party."

The Theses of the HVK put forward an eight-point immediate program which included: "The unconditional, material defense of the Islamic Republic against military interventions by the imperialists and the conspiracies of their internal and exter-

nal allies. . . . Confiscation of the property of the capitalists and landowners who collaborate with the coup plotters, and those who sabotage the economy by hoarding, profiteering, and cheating. Complete monopoly of foreign trade. Nationalization and amalgamation of banks and insurance companies under the control of workers and employees' shoras," worker and peasant control of production, and extension of higher education.

The third point of the immediate program of the Theses was "the extension and unification of factory shoras . . . for recognition of shoras by the government. . . . For executive power of the shoras. For independence and democracy of the shoras. . . ." Fourth, the Theses pledged the HVK to work for "Land distribution under the control of peasant shoras," and the provision of credit, technical help, and other aid to the peasants. Fifth, it called for "the right of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities."

The sixth point indicated a significant difference from the position of the HKE: "Equal rights for women. Priority to women in educational programs. Against the expulsion of women from the work force. Against compulsory veiling and any kind of discrimination and humiliation of women." The seventh "immediate objective" stated in the Theses of the HVK was a demand for reestablishment of civil liberties. The last was for the placing of the Ministry of Labor "under the control of workers shoras."⁴⁸

In the months following its establishment the HVK was particularly active in stressing the rights of the Kurds to self-determination, and demanding an end to government military operations against the Kurds.⁴⁹ It strongly criticized the government's massive arrest of members of the Mujahedeen and groups allied with it and the execution of many of those arrested.⁵⁰

In July 1981 the HVK paper *Hemmat* announced the death in battle with Iraqi forces of Samad Asari Eskandari, the youngest member of the party's Central Committee. Only twenty years old, Eskandari, an Azer-

bajani, had been one of the principal founders of the Young Socialist Organization, the HVK's youth group.⁵¹

Final Observations on Iranian Trotskyism

None of the three Iranian Trotskyist organizations was able to survive for long. As the theocratic Khomeini regime tightened its hold on Iran, it cracked down on all left-wing opposition, including the Trotskyists. As Joseph Dwyer noted early in 1983, "Khomeini's government and the Revolutionary Guards have lumped them all together under one convenient title *monofequin* [hypocrites] and waged a vicious campaign in 1982 to rid Iran of them."⁵² By early 1985 the Twelfth World Congress of the United Secretariat, although devoting some attention to the Iranian situation in its resolution on "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International," made no reference to any of the Iranian parties which had been associated with USEC.⁵³

Thus, although the advent of the Iranian Revolution had made possible the appearance for the first time of a Trotskyist movement in Iran, that same revolution assured the quick demise—or at least suppression—of that movement. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this train of events was the failure of the Trotskyists—both those in Iran and in USEC itself—to assess or deal with the Khomeini regime in the religious context in which that regime saw itself, and acted. Instead of seeing the Islamic Republican regime as a theocracy, fundamentally controlled by the clergy and imposing upon the nation a structure conforming the clergy's vision of Moslem orthodoxy, the Trotskyists continued to try to judge it in purely class terms, as a struggle between the bourgeoisie and landowners on one side and the workers and peasants on the other. They were almost alone in this interpretation of Iranian events after 1979.

Trotskyism in Iraq

There is information that a Trotskyist party was established in Iraq in the late 1970s or early 1980s by former members of the ruling Baath Socialist Party. It was associated with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International although it was not apparently an official section of USEC.¹

There is little additional information available concerning Trotskyism in Iraq. However, it is undoubtedly true that the general comments of Israeli Trotskyist leader Michel Warshawski concerning the Trotskyist groups in the Arab countries apply well to the Trotskyist element in Iraq. He said that "in most of these countries, the Trotskyist organizations are very small groups, of thirty, forty members, no more." Warshawski added that they were largely involved in "establishing ourselves, publishing political materials, and trying to convince the first nucleus of cadres."²

Trotskyism in Ireland

Ireland has never figured as a major center of strength for International Trotskyism. The movement really did not get a foothold at all there until World War II and even then there were several false starts. Its various factions and tendencies have been more than usually plagued with the problem of relations with other political currents on the Left. The partition of Ireland has meant that the Trotskyists have not only had to find a "political space" for themselves with regard to relations with the Social Democrats and Stalinists, but also with regard to the nationalists of various hues and policies.

The Origins of Irish Trotskyism

The first exposition of Trotskyist ideas in Ireland took place in 1935, when C. L. R. James, the West Indian who was then a leader of British Trotskyism, visited the island. D. R. O'Connor Lysaght has noted that "he lectured on the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and angered the Communist Party by exposing the Third International's failure to oppose Italian imperialism. All that came of this was that he persuaded Nora Connolly O'Brien to write to Trotsky, who was then interned in Norway."¹

The first real converts to Trotskyism were to be among those Irishmen who went to Spain to fight on the Loyalist side in the Civil War. Two of those people were of particular importance: Robert Armstrong, who had joined the Stalinist-controlled International Brigade, and Patrick Trench, who had fought with the militia of the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM). A third Irish participant in the Spanish Civil War, Geoffrey Coulter, entered into contact with the Socialist Workers Party of the United

States but subsequently dropped out of political activity.²

Immediately upon returning to Ireland Armstrong went to England, where he stayed for a couple years. Patrick Trench joined the Irish Labor Party (ILP), where in November 1939 he became secretary of the ILP's Pearse St. branch. Also, with the encouragement of Michael Price, leader of the Labor Party's left wing but by no means a Trotskyist or even a Marxist, Trench began publishing articles in the *Torch*, the organ of the Labor Party's Constituency Council, of which Price was secretary.³

In 1939 the emergence of Trotskyism in Ireland got a stimulus from the outbreak of World War II and the impact of that event on British Trotskyism. Some time before, in December 1938, the Revolutionary Socialist League, which had just been recognized as the British section of the recently established Fourth International, suffered a split. A group opposed to the line of entry into the British Labor Party broke away to establish Workers Fight. That group, together with some Irishmen resident in Britain, soon joined forces with the Workers International League (WIL).⁴

In September 1939 a number of the leaders of WIL, fearful of persecution because of the outbreak of the war, established an "exile" headquarters in the Irish Free State. They had contact with Patrick Trench and other Trotskyist sympathizers, and one WIL leader, Thomas Gerard (Gerry) Healy, contributed at least two articles to *Torch*.

When the repression that they had expected in Great Britain did not materialize most of the WIL people returned to that country. Robert Armstrong, who had come back to Ireland with them, went to Belfast where he set about building a left wing in the Republican Socialist Party in Northern Ireland. Thomas Reilly, John Byrne, and other former Irish Republicans who had also come with the WIL group from Britain stayed in Dublin to work with Trench.

Then in June 1940 there was a change

in the editorship of *Torch*, which gave the Trotskyists even more access to that periodical than had previously been the case. Among the articles which Trench contributed to it was an obituary of Leon Trotsky.

Thus, by 1941 there were two small Trotskyist groups, without any affiliation with the Fourth International in Ireland. One was in Belfast, where it worked particularly within the Republican Socialist Party; the other was in Dublin, where its members were active in the Irish Labor Party. The Belfast group tended to be considerably more sympathetic than that in Dublin to the cause of the struggle for a united Ireland.

Lysaght has noted that "in the Labor Party, Trench's political struggles included demands for a sliding scale of wages, for more measures of nationalization and against the removal, under clerical pressure, of the Workers Republic as the Party's constitutional aim." He added that "in practice, the Dublin Trotskyists were activists. They played a big role within the opposition to the Fianna Fail Government's Trade Union Bill in its aim to license trade unions and limit their rights of recruitment. A Council of Action established in this eventually unsuccessful fight was maintained by the Trotskyists for housing and other agitations."⁵

The Dublin Trotskyists also became involved in the controversy over Irish neutrality in World War II. Within the Left there were wide-ranging points of view, from those who wanted the Irish to be "neutral in favor of Britain" to those who sought help in arms and money from the Nazis in the struggle for a united Irish republic.

Lysaght has noted that "against all these arguments, Trench (and Price) presented a conception of Irish neutrality as a positive war against the war. They urged that Irish Laborites should use the twenty-six county state's position as a base from which to contact anti-Axis resistance movements and the anticolonial movements in the lands of the democratic imperialists. In 1941,

Trench persuaded the Labor Party Conference to pass a general motion on positive neutrality. . . . The next year, however, a more detailed motion was defeated overwhelmingly."⁶

By 1943 the situation of the Dublin Trotskyists had been seriously undermined in the Irish Labor Party. For one thing, the control of *Torch* was taken over by the Labor Party's Administrative Council, and after October 1941 the Trotskyists no longer had access to its columns. For another, the Labor Party decided early in 1943 to limit membership of branches of the party to those people who lived in the branches' neighborhoods. The only unit to which this rule seems to have been applied was the Pearse Street Branch, where the strength of the Trotskyists was concentrated.⁷

The Revolutionary Socialist Party

Rather than trying to resist the maneuvers of the Labor Party leadership against them, the Dublin Trotskyists decided to withdraw from the party. Together with the Trotskyists of Northern Ireland, they established the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), which as Lysaght noted was "Ireland's first open Trotskyist party." It was recognized as the Irish Section of the Fourth International at the International Conference of 1946.

The RSP started its existence with about eighty members, fifty in the Belfast area and thirty in the Dublin region. Early in 1944 it published a document entitled "Theses on the National Question," which Lysaght claimed "remains a major landmark in Irish Marxist theory. . . . Most relevant of all, today, is its insistence that the demand for national unity could act as dynamic rather than as brake on social struggles. It prophesied accurately, too, that a civil liberties agitation might perform a revolutionary role." Lysaght added that "from the point of view of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the "Theses" most ominous failure was its un-

derestimation of the effectiveness of the opportunism of Stalinism."⁸

The Revolutionary Socialist Party had branches in three cities: Belfast, Dublin, and Cork. The last of these developed quite independently of the other two, by people who had been won over to Trotskyist ideas by literature of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, which had been distributed by an SWP seaman named Carroll who worked on the ship *City of Vancouver*. The Cork group affiliated with the RSP in 1943.

During the period of the RSP there were two periodicals expressing Trotskyist ideas. One of these was *Northern Star*, published in Belfast by the Republican Socialist Party there, and the other was *Workers' Republic*, issued by the Revolutionary Socialist Party itself.⁹

The Revolutionary Socialist Party survived only until 1947-48. It was finally torn apart by the controversy then going on in the Fourth International concerning the nature of the Soviet Union. One element, particularly among the RSP members in Belfast, supported those in the International who were arguing that the Soviet Union had become "state capitalist." When the Second Congress of the International went on record declaring the Soviet Union and other Stalinist-dominated countries to be "degenerated" or "deformed" workers' states, most of those people abandoned the RSP. The further disintegration of the party was hastened by the fact that its two most important figures had disappeared from the scene. Patrick Trench died early in 1948 and Robert Armstrong left Ireland, seeking work in Great Britain. By August 1948 there were only two members of the RSP left and they decided to try to work within the Irish Labor Party and the Stalinist-controlled Socialist Youth.¹⁰

From International Workers Group to Movement for a Socialist Republic

It was nearly two decades after the demise of the Revolutionary Socialist Party before

Trotskyism was reestablished in Ireland. The only exception to this was the existence in Belfast of a branch of the British-based Socialist Labor League headed by Gerry Healy.

The person who refounded Irish Trotskyism was Gery Lawless. He had first become acquainted with Trotskyist ideas while interned in the Curragh prison camp, where he read the documents of the Fifth World Congress of the Pabloite faction of the Fourth International. After being released Lawless went to Great Britain, where he became a member of the Socialist Labor League (SLL). There, in 1963, he opposed the refusal of the SLL to participate in the "unity congress" which established the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

According to Lysaght, Lawless then "sought to build an Irish Trotskyist group that would not take sides in the international. . . Trotskyist controversies. In this course he made strange bedfellows among London's Irish immigrants. First he formed an Irish Workers Union. Then he combined with the Maoists who would constitute the so-called Irish Communist Organization. . . in an Irish Communist group. When this last split into Trotskyist and Stalinist parts in late 1965, the former founded the Irish Workers Group (IWG), which brought Trotskyism back to Ireland, at last."¹¹

The IWG established its first branch in Dublin in 1967. Soon afterward a branch was also organized in Belfast under the leadership of Michael Farrell. A third branch was set up in Dundalk. In both the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland the IWG worked principally within the Labor parties of the two regions.

The Irish Workers Group was soon split into warring factions. One was led by Sean Matgamna, who had come back from Britain with Lawless. He was soon leading a faction seeking Lawless's ouster from the organization. When the Matgamna group was defeated they withdrew on St. Patrick's Day 1968 to establish the League for a Workers

Republic (LWR) headed by Patrick Healy (no relation to Gerry Healy). The LWR was active only in the Republic of Ireland, since the Belfast members of the old IWG soon withdrew to join in the formation of a new group, not yet clearly Trotskyist, the People's Democracy. With these splits the IWG was for all practical purposes liquidated although it did not officially go out of existence until May 1969.¹²

The League for a Workers Republic, the only remaining Trotskyist group after the disappearance of the IWG, also was marked by factional fighting among groups sympathetic to the competing tendencies in international Trotskyism. Some broke away to join the Healyite International Committee. On Easter Sunday 1971 another group sympathetic to the United Secretariat split away, reportedly taking a majority of the LWR's Dublin branch and some Young Socialists.

In January 1972 the USEC sympathizers in the Republic of Ireland joined with a group from Belfast to establish the Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG). It was accepted in February 1974 by the Tenth World Congress of the United Secretariat as the Irish section of USEC. In 1976 the RMG changed its name to Movement for a Socialist Republic (MSR).¹³

The RMG/MSR took a strong position in favor of the unification of Ireland, and made this issue the centerpiece of its propaganda. Thus in May 1974 the Political Committee of the RMG issued this statement: "The Revolutionary Marxist Group calls for setting up a united front against repression by all Republican and socialist forces. In the last analysis only a mass movement can prevent the Loyalists, British imperialism, and its collaborators from carrying on their campaign of aggression against the working class of Ireland."¹⁴

In August 1977, when two MSR representatives were present as fraternal delegates at the national convention of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, one of these, Anne Farrelly, commented: "The main task for Irish revo-

lutionaries now is to pose the question of the democratic rights of the Irish people as a whole, North and South. We have to begin to show that the Southern state is not just a bystander with regard to the struggle in the North, but is actually involved in the whole process of pushing the situation there back to what it was fifty years ago. . . ."¹⁵

By 1978 the MSR claimed to be gaining substantial influence within the Irish student movement. MSR leader Brendan Kelly, in an interview with the American Trotskyist Gerry Foley in Dublin said that "I think that on the ground in the bigger universities, revolutionists are in a much stronger position now than they have been. For example, in University College, Dublin, the "Officials," as well as the Labor Party, have ceased functioning as an organized group. In contrast to this, the MSR is fairly well implanted there and has a number of representatives on the Student Union Council."¹⁶

The Origins of People's Democracy

The RMG /MSR was largely confined to the Republic of Ireland. In Northern Ireland the rebirth of the Trotskyist movement largely came about as a result of the evolution of what was originally not a Trotskyist group at all, People's Democracy (PD).

People's Democracy had its origins in the New Left of the late 1960s. Lysaght has noted that the PD's predecessor, the Young Socialist Alliance, "was founded by the Belfast IWG members, most of whom had been in South Belfast Young Socialists, associated with the Northern Irish Labor Party (NILP). The YSA was an attempt to unite LP and non-LP Socialist Youth Groups."¹⁷

The YSA very soon organized demonstrations on a number of different issues including the Vietnam War, bad housing in Belfast and Derry and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. It also participated in the first civil rights march in Coalisland in the summer of 1968.

The YSA again participated in a civil rights

march, this time in Derry, on October 5, 1968, and organized a march on the Belfast City Hall on October 9. This Belfast demonstration was broken up by the police and paramilitary groups. Then, as Mike Farrell has written "The students were frustrated and demoralized. YSA members took the initiative and proposed the establishment of a permanent Civil Rights organization. The People's Democracy was born."

The PD was at first a loosely organized group patterned on student-worker assemblies which had arisen in the uprising in Paris earlier that year. However, Farrell writes, "The YSA hard-core . . . gave it a leaven of tough determination and the political influence of the YSA in the looser body grew rapidly."

The PD refused to call off civil rights demonstrations when Northern Ireland Prime Minister Terence O'Neill proposed a series of moderate reforms favoring the Catholics. Early in 1969, when O'Neill called a general election in which he sought Catholic support for a number of moderate candidates of the Unionist Party (the predominantly Protestant group favoring continued association with Great Britain), People's Democracy ran eight candidates against the O'Neill coalition, who together received 23,000 votes.

Meanwhile, the Young Socialist Alliance had "dissolved itself into [the] PD." As the civil rights movement intensified PD organized a march to and across the border of the Irish Republic. Then in August 1969, when physical attacks were mounted by Protestant elements on Catholic areas in Belfast and Derry, PD forces joined the barricades which were raised in the Catholic areas and for a while ran Radio Free Belfast and a newspaper issued by the Catholic resistance people. However, they soon closed the radio and withdrew from the paper because of political disagreements with IRA elements in general charge of the resistance efforts.¹⁸

As a revolutionary organization, People's

Democracy not infrequently got into trouble with the authorities of Northern Ireland. On July 5, 1977, John McAnulty, General Secretary of the PD, was arrested and charged with possessing documents "likely to be of assistance to terrorists." The PD organized a petition campaign, the petition saying in part, "John McAnulty's case is clearly a case of political harassment and we call upon the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Irish Government to press for his immediate release."¹⁹ He was subsequently released without being brought to trial.

On August 2, 1978, the British Army raided the PD's Connolly Bookshop in Belfast, arresting McAnulty and John McGeown of the MSR. After four hours the two men were released, but the entire contents of the bookshop were kept by the Army authorities.²⁰

Another PD leader, Dennis Murphy, was sentenced late in 1978 for possession of arms and ammunition. In his trial, he admitted possessing these but argued that he had them in order to defend himself and those around him in case of attack by Protestant elements.²¹

During the 1970s People's Democracy went through a process of political evolution. According to John McAnulty,

In the early organization we defined ourselves as socialists without any clear idea of what that meant . . . we didn't[sic] have the benefit of a developed program and a strong foundation in political theory. We had to learn from experience and that has been both our strength and our weakness. . . . We rediscovered for ourselves the main principle of Connolly's socialism—that to be a socialist in Ireland you must be an anti-imperialist and that most consistent anti-imperialist fighters were always willing to unite in action with other sections of the anti-imperialism movement and with a rounded understanding of the political, social, and economic aspects of imperialist domination.

As a consequence of their ideological evolution, People's Democracy clearly differentiated themselves from IRA elements and the Communist Party: "We rejected their 'stages theory' that reform in the North would be followed at long intervals first by a United Ireland and then by Socialism. We developed our own understanding of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution—seeing that any movement strong enough to defeat imperialism and establish a United Ireland would move on to win a Workers Republic."²²

During the middle 1970s People's Democracy suffered a major split. McAnulty has noted that after a general strike of Protestant workers brought about the downfall of a Northern Ireland government of moderate Protestants and Catholics, People's Democracy "saw a danger of a Fascist takeover and began to stress more and more the need for military defence. The Loyalist takeover never came, and when we began to adjust our political strategy to take account of the reality, there was a serious division in our organization and almost half the membership split away."

However, McAnulty added that "the long-term results of the split were healthy. We were able to go back to political first principles and restate our program differences with Republicanism—our belief that the major force for revolution came from the activity of the masses and that the driving force within this mass struggle could only be the organized power of the working class."²³

The United People's Democracy

The exit of the devotees of physical force from People's Democracy also facilitated the unification of the organization with the United Secretariat's supporters in the Republic of Ireland. According to Lysaght, "Gradually, PD and RMC/MSR found themselves working together with political agreement on most issues. As early as 1974-75,

they initiated unity talks which collapsed over disagreements on the International and on the question of physical force. . . . In 1975 and 1976, the main advocates of physical force left the PD. In 1977, negotiations began again with the MSR and ended in December 1978, in the fusion of the two organizations. In November 1981, the new People's Democracy affiliated to the Fourth International [USEC]."²⁴

The united People's Democracy continued to center much of its attention on the struggle for a united Ireland. It was particularly active in the campaign centering on the hunger strikes of several IRA prisoners in Northern Ireland in 1981 over the issue of their being treated as common prisoners instead of political prisoners. People's Democracy published and widely distributed several pamphlets on the issue, including *Prisoners of Partition: B-Block/Armagh and Internment '71, H-Block '81: The Same Struggle*.

They were also active in campaigns around other issues. For instance, they put out a pamphlet in the form of a special supplement to their newspaper *Socialist Republic* in July 1984 entitled *Nicaragua: Revolution on the March! The Lessons for Ireland*. They also featured the Nicaraguan situation in their periodical from time to time.²⁵ Their newspaper also gave publicity to various labor conflicts in Ireland and in other countries. It likewise gave strong support to the campaign for legalizing divorce in the Irish Republic and against a constitutional amendment in the Republic to outlaw abortion.²⁶

People's Democracy was interested in placing their movement in the historical framework of early revolutionary groups and events in Ireland. To this end, they published, for example, a pamphlet which went through at least two editions, D. R. O'Connor Lysaght's *The Story of the Limerick Soviet: The 1919 General Strike Against British Militarism*.

People's Democracy also ran candidates

in general and local elections in both parts of Ireland. Lysaght has summed up this kind of activity of People's Democracy in Northern Ireland, The RMC/MBR in the South, and the united People's Democracy:

PD ran candidates in the 1969 N.I. general election with impressive but unsuccessful results. From then until 1981, it tended to abstentionism. The MSR did run a candidate in East Limerick in the Republic's 1977 general election around the front paper *Bottom Dog*, unsuccessfully. Our same candidate, Joe Harrington, ran for the city Corporation in 1979 as an entrant member of the SLP (Socialist Labor Party) and for East Limerick for the Dail in 1981 (H. Block) and February 1982 for PD. All unsuccessful. . . . In Dublin, our NC member, Vincent Doherty, got 1,500 votes as a pro-hunger striker candidate in 1981 in North-Central. In the two 1982 general elections subsequently, we sponsored the candidacy of Bernadette MacAliskey; in the February one, she held her deposit. The only other candidate in the Dublin area was Mervyn Morrissey in the Dunlaught local election of 1979, with the State Capitalism (SWN) Dermot Byrne for the SLP. . . . In Belfast, PD won two council seats (John McNulty and Fergus O'Hare) in the hunger strike local election of 1981. This was helped by Sinn Fein's abstentionism at the time, when they ran for the Assembly the next year, S.F. swamped them. . . . Gregg Duff ran unsuccessfully for PD in Shannon Town Commissioner in 1982.²⁷

At the time of the election for a Northern Ireland Assembly in 1982, People's Democracy and Bernadette MacAliskey joined forces to try to get all nationalist-oriented groups in the "six counties" to boycott the elections. When the Sinn Fein decided to run candidates, People's Democracy also named a few of its own, feeling that a partial boycott would be futile.²⁸

In the 1985 British general election People's Democracy urged its supporters in

Northern Ireland to vote for the candidates of Sinn Fein, the legal political party of the IRA. However, in doing so, it clearly had grave reservations about Sinn Fein. A front-page editorial in *Socialist Republic* urging a vote for the IRA group ended, "The support given to Sinn Fein demonstrates clearly that the basis for renewing the mass struggle to win Irish unity and independence is maturing fast. Does Sinn Fein dare give a lead?"²⁹

The emergence of Sinn Fein as a serious competitor in Northern Ireland elections clearly did some electoral damage to the PD. Thus, in municipal polls of May 1985 PD lost its two seats in the Belfast council to Sinn Fein. However, in June, Joseph Harrington of PD won a seat in the Limerick city council, getting the second highest vote.³⁰

In participating in elections, the PD was by no means indicating that it thought that the revolution could be accomplished through the ballot box. In an essay entitled "Education for Socialists: Our View of Elections," *Socialist Republic* said, "Anyone who sees elections as bringing about change by themselves is living in a dream-world, but ignoring them or using them simply as propaganda vehicles is irresponsible. Elections properly used are a springboard for organization and independent action by the working class. The problem is that only class-conscious parties of the working class have the program to do this effectively. . . ."³¹

The skepticism of the PD about elections did not mean that they in any way endorsed the IRA's reliance on armed action. In their pamphlet about the hunger strike campaign, they wrote: "Militarism is the belief that military action represents a qualitative step beyond mass action and that armed groups can substitute for the masses and themselves carry out the revolution. We in People's Democracy hold to the Marxist belief that the actions of the masses and the organization of the working class represent the key to revolutionary victory. The Irish people have of course the right to use force against imperialism, the cause of all the blood and violence, but the correct applica-

tion of force is in the defense of the mass movement rather than in the operation of a separate military campaign."³²

Other Trotskyist Groups

Aside from the United Secretariat, two other tendencies in International Trotskyism have had affiliates in Ireland. These are the International Committee of Gerry Healy and the Lambertist Organization Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI).

As already noted, the Socialist Labor League (SLL) of Great Britain maintained a branch in Northern Ireland during the 1950s and 1960s. It was not until 1970 that Gerry Healy and the SLL became interested in recruiting followers in the Irish Republic. For that purpose, they sought to gain influence in the Young Socialists, the youth group of the League for a Workers Republic. According to the periodical of the SLL's U.S. counterpart, the Workers League, "Led by its National Secretary John Sirmance, a special recruiting team visited Dublin from Britain to join the Irish Young Socialists in the building of their revolutionary youth movement."³³

By the time of the split in the International Committee between Gerry Healy and the SLL on one side and Lambert and CORQI on the other, Healy had an allied group in Ireland, the League for a Workers Vanguard. It had been accepted as a section of the International Committee at the IC's 1970 pre-conference, and it was a signer of one of the major documents in the polemics between the Healyites and the Lambertists, the "Statement of the International Committee [Majority]," issued on October 24, 1971.³⁴ Apparently the SLL branches in Northern Ireland became part of the League for a Workers Vanguard (LWV).

In the mid-1970s the LWV became the Workers League. According to Lysaght, admittedly an unfriendly source, "It seemed to disappear almost overnight, in 1978, though there is still some sort of organization in

Belfast and, perhaps, Derry. They were, and the Belfast ones still are, very much into the 'security' rubbish,"³⁵ that is, the claims of Gerry Healy and his followers that Joseph Hansen and George Novack were agents of the GPU and the FBI and implicated in the murder of Trotsky.

It was the League for a Workers Republic which became the Irish section of the CORQI tendency of International Trotskyism. As we have already noted, this group was established under the leadership of Patrick Healy on St. Patrick's Day 1963, and for a few years was the only avowedly Trotskyist group in Ireland. According to Lysaght,

... the LWR developed its theory on the lines of what might be called copybook Marxism. It applied the basic aphorisms of Marxism literally and consistently without considering the context of the move. . . . Above all the essence of 'working-class unity' was interpreted not only as necessitating an orientation to the orange workers . . . but also to those sections of the said class in the twenty-six countries who were indifferent or, even, hostile to the demand for national unification. . . . So it was that when, in August 1969, the northern struggle escalated into warfare, the LWR responded by presenting proposals for repartitioning Northern Ireland. Subsequently, this was justified by a claim that there were two Irish 'nationalities.'³⁶

The LWR joined the CORQI sometime after CORQI's split with Gerry Healy and the British SLL. Until the late 1970s it appears to have been confined only to the Republic of Ireland. However, at the time of its seventh conference in April 1979 it was announced that for the first time the group had been able to establish a branch in Belfast, which was represented at the conference. That meeting was said to have paid attention particularly to work in the unions, establishment of units in enterprises, work among students, and strengthening of the group's penetration in Northern Ireland.³⁷

In the Irish Republic parliamentary elections held in 1981, at the time of the hunger strikes of the IRA prisoners, the LWR ran Patrick Healy as a "pro-hunger strike" candidate for the Dublin North-east constituency. Although he was defeated, Healy's campaign was called by Lysaght "a nice try."³⁸

It is reported that the Northern Ireland part of the LWR "disappeared in the aftermath of 1981." Lysaght has noted that "it was always a very low profile, and practically incognito body. . . . The LWR may still have a Belfast branch, but it must be the least exposed legal body in that city. . . ."³⁹

Continued activity of pro-LWR elements is indicated by the fact that Patrick Healy's brother Seamus was elected to the Clonmel city council in the June 1985 elections. Lysaght has written about this that "I do not think he is actually a member of the LWR. (He certainly was not in 1981.) He is however, sympathetic to Trotskyist politics."⁴⁰

Two other Trotskyist groups which have been associated with factions of British Trotskyism have also existed in Ireland. One is the Socialist Workers Movement, which has shared the "state capitalist" interpretation of the Soviet Union and other Communist Party-controlled regimes with the Independent Socialists/Socialist Workers Party of Great Britain, and was represented at a meeting of the worldwide International Socialist Tendency in London in September 1984.⁴¹ The other group is the one around the *Militant Irish Monthly*, more or less aligned with the British Militant Tendency. Of these, Lysaght has said that "they are bigger . . . than ourselves or the Irish Healyites and/or Irish Lambertists."⁴² Unfortunately, we have obtained little further information about these two groups.

Conclusion

Trotskyism was late in getting established in Ireland. Even after it got its first foothold

it disappeared largely as a result of the conflicts within the Fourth International in the 1940s. When it was revived almost two decades later it was still split among five of the tendencies in International Trotskyism, that is, the United Secretariat, Gerry Healy's International Committee, the CORQI led by Pierre Lambert, the International Socialist Tendency, and the British Militant Tendency.

All Irish Trotskyist factions have been largely peripheral to the organized labor movement, not being able to establish any significant base in it. Finally, all branches of Irish Trotskyism have found their relationship with the Irish nationalist movement to be a particularly difficult issue to handle, although by the early 1980s all segments of the movement were committed to the struggle for the unification of the island.

Trotskyism in Israel

In spite of the anti-Zionist position of Trotskyism, from which it has never veered, it established one of its earliest and longest-lasting organizations in Palestine-Israel. It first took root there in the pre-World War II period, principally among Jewish immigrants. That early movement virtually disappeared in the 1950s, but during the next decade and thereafter a new Trotskyist group emerged in Israel.

Trotsky and Zionism

Before sketching the evolution of Trotskyism in Palestine and Israel, note should be taken of Leon Trotsky's own attitude towards Zionism. He was never a Zionist and seemed to regard even the fact that he was a Jew as more an accident of birth than anything else. At least until the very last years of his life he was an assimilationist and most of all an internationalist.

Through most of his career Trotsky even resisted the idea that the Jews were a separate "people" or "nation" either within Czarist Russia or Soviet Russia. In the earliest years of the Russian Social Democratic movement he fought the attempt of the Jewish Labor Bund to gain recognition as a specifically Jewish organization which would have the right to make Social Democratic policy on Jewish issues. Rather, he felt that at most the Bund should be the group in the party which proselytized and carried out party policy among Yiddish-speaking workers.¹

Of course he could not be totally oblivious to the fact of his own Jewish background. That fact intruded itself from time to time in his political career. Thus, he is said to have turned down Lenin's suggestion that he become Commissar of the Interior in the

first Bolshevik government on the grounds that it would be harmful for both the Revolution and the Jews to have a Jew in charge of suppressing the counterrevolution.² Subsequently, Trotsky pointed out on various occasions in the 1920s and later that Stalin used anti-Semitism as a weapon against the Opposition, because of the presence of several prominent Jews, including himself, in its leadership.³

As for political Zionism, throughout most of his political career Trotsky apparently paid little heed to the question at all. However, upon occasion, he expressed curiosity about the movement. He apparently wrote only one full-length article on the subject, in the January 1, 1904, issue of *Iskra*.⁴

Joseph Nedava has summed up Trotsky's attitude towards Zionism thus:

To begin with, he never favored a Zionist solution to the Jewish problem even on a partial basis. He considered the movement as reactionary and regressive, like all nationalist movements. But in 1903, shortly after the second congress, which brought about the breakup of the Social-Democratic party, he was curious enough to acquaint himself with Zionism at close quarters; this accounts for his presence, as a guest, at the Sixth Zionist Congress at Basel. But he was not converted to the Zionist program. Many years later, in 1937, when his career was at its lowest ebb and he envisioned the catastrophe in store for the Jewish people in Germany and in East Europe, he once again showed interest in Zionism. . . .⁵

The nearest that Trotsky came to conceding some validity to Zionism was in an interview he gave with a *Jewish Daily Forward* correspondent in January 1937, soon after arriving in Mexico. He started his discussion of the subject by saying that "on the Jewish question, first of all, I can say that it cannot be resolved within the framework of the capitalist system, nor can it be resolved by Zionism." He later added that "the Jewish

question will only be resolved by the socialist revolution."

However, in this interview, Trotsky indicated a certain evolution in his own thinking, as a consequence of what was then happening in Europe. He noted that "At one time I thought that the Jews would assimilate into the peoples and cultures they lived among. This was the case in Germany and even in America, and for this reason it was possible to make such a prediction. . . . But now it is impossible to say this. Recent history has taught us something about this. The fate of the Jews has been posed as a burning question particularly in Germany, and the Jews who had forgotten their ancestry were clearly reminded of it. . . . If capitalism continues to survive for a long time, the Jewish question will be posed in the same way in all countries where Jews live, including the USA."

Trotsky then made a concession on the question which until then had not been characteristic of him:

I can say, however, that under the socialist order, the Jews, too, can and should lead their own lives as a people, with their own culture, which has undergone a profound development in recent years. The territorial question is pertinent because it is easier for a people to carry out an economic and cultural plan when it lives in a compact mass. . . . Under socialism that question will arise, and with the consent of the Jews who desire it, there might be a free mass emigration, which no one would be forced to join, just as in general there will be no rule of force in the socialist state. For if a group of Jews maintain that they wish to live under socialism in the Jewish culture, which makes it possible for them to live in accordance with their own way and their own spirit, then why shouldn't they be able to do this?⁶

Of course, even this concession of the relevance of "the territorial question" as part of "the Jewish problem" was far from an

endorsement of the idea of all Jews "returning" to Palestine. Shortly before his death Trotsky confirmed this: "The attempt to solve the Jewish question through the migration of Jews to Palestine can now be seen for what it is, a tragic mockery of the Jewish people. . . ."⁷

International Trotskyism maintained, both during his lifetime and afterwards, Trotsky's opposition to Zionism.

Palestinian Trotskyism

Trotskyism in the 1930s

The Trotskyist movement in pre-World War II Palestine in part reflected a marked increase in Jewish migration from Europe resulting from the rise of the Nazis to power in Germany. In that influx, there were people of the widest variety of political persuasions, from far left to far right. Many of them joined in Palestine, or formed there for themselves, groups which reflected the ideas and positions which they had brought with them.

Among the new Jewish immigrants from Germany there arrived in 1937-38 a number of people who had belonged to the Communist Right Opposition of Heinrich Brandler and August Thalheimer. A majority of these quickly evolved in Palestine in a Trotskyist direction. However, this group tended to be relatively isolated in the Palestinian milieu of the time.

A second element which was attracted to Trotskyism in that period consisted of members of the Chugim Marxistim (Marxist Circle), the youth section of one of the wings of the Left Poale Zion Party, the left-wing labor Zionists. This group, consisting largely of Jewish youths born in Palestine, had by the late 1930s evolved towards Trotskyist ideas, in spite of the fact that Left Poale Zion was officially aligned with the so-called London Bureau. It began to publish a periodical, *Kol Hama'amed* (*Class Voice*). By the outbreak of World War II contact had

been established between them and the German exile group.

Although the British police sometimes interfered with the publication of *Kol Hama'amed*, it appeared in multigraphed form whenever it was possible to bring it out. Three numbers of a periodical in German, *Gegen den Strom (Against the Stream)* were also published.

A third major pro-Trotskyist element consisted of people coming from the Haschomer-Hazair, the Left Zionist kibbutz movement. They merged with the other two Trotskyist groups to form Brit Kommunistim Nahapchanim (Alliance of Revolutionary Communists) shortly before the Second World War began.

There was a fourth pro-Trotskyist group which did not collaborate with the other three. It was also made up of German immigrants, who felt that the Trotskyists should confine themselves to studying and theorizing rather than participating in mass organizations or practical political activities.⁸

Ideological Positions of Palestinian Trotskyists

The members of the Alliance of Revolutionary Communists considered themselves an integral part of the world Trotskyist movement, and as the Palestine Section of the Fourth International. They apparently were not officially so recognized by the International, since no Palestinian group was reported to be affiliated with or "in contact with" the International Secretariat at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International.⁹

The ideological position of the Palestinian Trotskyists has been more or less officially described thus: "the necessity of an anti-Stalinist struggle and of the establishment of a new revolutionary International and revolutionary national sections; the necessity of a political revolution in the Soviet Union for the overthrow of the bureaucratic rule and for the restoration of socialist de-

mocracy; opposition to Zionism as an erroneous conception of the 'solution of the Jewish question' by the concentration of Jews in Palestine; the creation of a socialist Arab-Jewish entity within a 'United Socialist Arab East.' "

The Palestinian Trotskyists, like Leon Trotsky himself, were strongly anti-Zionist. The same more or less official statement of their position on this issue which we have cited declared that they felt that Zionism "was not only incapable of solving the problem of the Jews in the world, but it already was creating a new Jewish problem within the framework of the Arab East."¹⁰

We understood this in the following way:

The Jewish question in modern capitalism was the result on the one hand of the development of the crisis within capitalism itself, and on the other of the failure to develop a realization of the revolutionary socialist perspective on the solution of the problem. . . . The "Brit" rejected the creation of a Jewish state, which would only be a part of the declining order and could only sharpen the Jewish question. Furthermore, such a state could be realized only by the expulsion of the original Arab population. . . . Zionist colonization was by its nature from the beginning necessarily bound up with the interests of imperialism, which were directed against the native masses. Zionist colonization could succeed only in the closest agreement with the interests and the assistance of one or more great powers.¹¹

The practical effect of Zionism was, according to this Trotskyist presentation, that it "created in Palestine a second socioeconomic sector, which was isolated from the Arabic population as much as possible. The Zionists drove out from their economic sector Arab workers and the Arab firms from the market, in order to establish a pure capitalist Jewish sector, as a forerunner of the Zionist state. As a result, the Jewish working class was isolated from the Arab popula-

tion and the Arab economic sector was robbed of any possibility of development. The so-called Trade Union (Histadrut) contributed in an essential way to both developments, for it was not a real trade union movement but a great economic trust in the service of Zionism. . . ."

The Palestinian Trotskyists developed a perspective for the Middle East which was to be continued by the Trotskyists of the region after the establishment of the State of Israel. This called for "the Socialist unification of the Arab East." They felt that their own task "was to propagandize and work organizationally for these tasks within the Jewish and Arab masses," and to create a unified revolutionary socialist party in the region, which the Stalinists who followed Kremlin diplomacy were incapable of doing. It saw as well only the political integration of the Jewish workers in the anti-imperialist and socialist struggle in the . . . "perspective of a united socialist Arab East."¹²

Palestinian Trotskyists During World War II

During the Second World War the Palestinian Trotskyists fought a kind of three-front conflict: against the Zionists, the British authorities, and the Stalinists. They continued to publish *Kol Hama'amed* in Hebrew as well as material in Arabic, German, and English. They established contact with some Trotskyists in the British Army, and through them restored contacts both with Trotskyist groups in Egypt and with the Revolutionary Communist Party of Great Britain. They also had some liaison with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

Within Palestine the Trotskyists won some converts from among Stalinists and their fellow travellers. They had a number of meetings with Dr. Stein, who headed a Democratic Front and from the 1920s on had published the official organ of the Communist Party although he himself did not belong to that party. One of those who ac-

companied Dr. Stein in these discussions was Jabra Nicola, an Arab Communist who left the party after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939.

The Palestinian Trotskyists during and right after the Second World War sought to gain some influence among the workers, both Jewish and Arab. The "Brit" issued leaflets from time to time in connection with labor conflicts on the railroads, in the oil companies and other firms which were owned or controlled by the British. However, they had only very limited success in these efforts, particularly insofar as the Arab workers were concerned.¹³

The Trotskyists and the Emergence of the State of Israel

The Palestinian Trotskyists, in spite of the fact that most of them were Jewish, remained loyal to their anti-Zionist position and strongly opposed the emergence of the Jewish State after World War II. In conformity with this position they campaigned, insofar as their limited resources permitted, against the UN resolution to partition the country.

Once the State of Israel had been proclaimed, the Trotskyists tried to defend the position of the Arabs in the new nation. A more or less official description of their position stated: "In this phase we concerned ourselves essentially with the propaganda against the expulsion, repression, and expropriation of the land and houses of the Palestinians by the Zionist state and its becoming an instrument of U.S. imperialism in the struggle against the developing Arab national revolutionary movement. As an alternative, we proposed the following plan: struggle for the right of the Arabs who had been expelled or fled to return to Palestine and the creation of a Palestinian state with full national rights for the Jews living there; political integration of the Jewish workers in the region; realization of both tasks

Decline of the Early Trotskyist Movement

Before the end of the Second World War the Palestinian Trotskyist movement had begun to disintegrate. One reason for this was a growing disagreement among its leaders and members about the relationship between Zionism and the establishment of Socialism. One element felt that it was impossible to set up a Socialist state in a Zionist context, while others, although continuing to be opposed to the idea of a Zionist state, felt that it was possible to continue the struggle for Socialism, as conceived of by the Trotskyist movement, even within the context of such a state.

Those who felt that Zionism and Socialism were totally incompatible left the country as soon as possible. There were three ways through which most of them left Palestine (or Israel after May 1948). Some became merchant sailors and went to sea; others joined the Jewish Army which the British had organized during the war and which fought, among other places, in Italy. The third group left Palestine to become representatives of Zionist organizations which were organizing the passage of other Jews to Palestine from Europe.¹⁵

In fact, a majority of the Palestinian Trotskyists left the country either during or in the years immediately following World War II. It has been reported that "there remained a small number of comrades, who developed a certain amount of activity, especially in the trade union field." This same source added that "the few who remained continued Trotskyist propaganda, which had some effect among . . . CP members in ideology, but for subjective and objective reasons not in political organization."¹⁶ Michel Warszawski has noted that the Revolutionary Communist Alliance went out of existence "in 1947 or 1948."¹⁷

Early History of Matzpen

During the late 1950s political developments began on the Israeli far left which were to give rise to the emergence of a new Trotskyist movement in the country. Various groups started up which were critical of Zionism from the left, and which had sympathy for revolutionary developments in a number of neighboring Arab countries, particularly the emergence of the Baath Socialist regime in Iraq.

However, it was not until the early 1960s that a new Trotskyist organization began to emerge in Israel. According to Michel Warszawski, "In 1962 a group of Communist Party members was expelled from the Communist Party because they expressed criticisms of the line of the Communist Party and the undemocratic internal life. They asked questions, too many questions, about the Soviet-Chinese conflict, they were critical about the role of the Communist Party in Cuba (it was right after the revolution), the role of the Communist Party in Iraq in the revolution of 1958. They were expelled, constituted Matzpen, which united quite quickly with the old Trotskyists," Yankel Taut and Jabra Nicola.¹⁸ They began to publish a periodical from which the group took its name, *Matzpen (Compass)*.¹⁹

The significance for Trotskyism of the rise of the Matzpen has been summed up thus: "The new and positive factors were, despite all serious weaknesses: 1. that it began to organize independently of the Stalinists the common Jewish-Arab anti-Zionist struggle; 2. that it created the possibility of the existence of revolutionary socialist forces in Israel; 3. that it spread the idea of Arabic-Israeli revolutionary anti-Zionist cooperation in the International Left; and 4. that it became a basis for the new development of Trotskyism in Israel."²⁰

It was after the 1967 War that the Matzpen group, which by then had taken the name

Israeli Socialist Organization (ISO), began to grow with some rapidity. For one thing, it began to attract a number of new recruits from among young recent immigrants from Europe and Latin America who had already had contact in their native lands with various far left political currents, particularly those of Guevarism and Trotskyism. Based largely on those people, a distinctly Trotskyist current developed within the ISO.²¹

Arie Bober, one of the leaders of the ISO, in an interview with two U.S. Trotskyists early in 1970, described his organization at that time:

The ISO is comprised of proportional parts, students and young intellectuals, a smaller part of workers, and a still smaller number of Arabs. There are many more Jews than Arabs. The reason is that our Arab members are much more heavily persecuted than Jewish members. . . .

The ISO is working on three levels. First is the student body, where our main propaganda emphasis is criticizing Zionist policy and fighting against the persecution of Arab students or Arab citizens of Israel. . . . The second level of our work is in the factories. We publish a special leaflet for workers, and the main point of our propaganda is trying to show that you cannot be a chauvinist and adhere to the 'Greater Israel' and then demand higher wages or a rising standard of living. . . .

The third level of work is directed at the Jewish community, especially recent immigrants, mostly young people. A great part of them came as leftists, as radicals, as revolutionaries—but with a Jewish entity, which is very understandable. We have told them, if you accept a Zionist outlook then you cannot be a socialist, and if you are a socialist you cannot be a Zionist. . . .²²

The ISO suffered some persecution from the Israeli government, particularly in connection with its activities among the Arabs. For instance, early in 1968 the ISO sought to

publish an Arabic-language weekly, *El-Mur*, and requested official government authorization. It was September 8 before they received a reply from the Haifa official involved to the effect that "in my authority according [to] point 94 of the Defence Regulations (Emergency), 1945, I refuse to grant you the requested permission certificate for edition of the above-mentioned weekly."²³

Government censorship of the ISO's Hebrew-language *Matzpen* was severe. Furthermore, freedom of movement of the organization's Arab members was sometimes limited, as when Jabra Nicola was officially informed on December 15, 1969, that he could not leave the city limits of Haifa without the personal permission of the local commanding general.²⁴

Michel Warshawski has noted: "We used to be arrested a lot when we were selling the newspapers . . . and our Arab members used to be arrested and kept in custody a week, two weeks. But most of the repression at that time was more social repression than political repression. To be a member of *Matzpen* in the late '60s and the beginning of the '70s was to be their enemy, to be the agents of the enemy of the country. To find work was almost impossible, and it was very difficult to have social relations with anyone, mainly the Left, the Left and so-called liberals were even more hostile to *Matzpen* than the official media and government policy."²⁵

The Israeli Lambertists

Two new Trotskyist groups, one associated with the Lambertist CORQI international current and one with the United Secretariat, emerged in the early 1970s. They were formed as a consequence of splits in the Israeli Socialist Organization in 1970 and 1972.

Late in 1970 a group broke away from the ISO to form Avant-Guard, which later took the name Workers Alliance (or Workers-League). It became affiliated with the Lam-

bertist Organization Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI). One Israeli associated with the United Secretariat faction has written that "at its origin, the WA was in disaccord . . . on two essential levels: divergences concerning international problems and associated with the divergences between the RI and the CORQI; divergences over the analysis of the political and social reality of the State of Israel and of Zionism."²⁶

Another United Secretariat supporter, Michel Warshawski, explained the position of the WA on Israel and Zionism in the following terms:

. . . they are unable to understand that the contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie has many aspects that are not directly and apparently a problem of the workers' struggle against the capitalists. This makes them unable to understand nationalism, Arab nationalism, and Zionism. They can't see the role of Zionism in the Arab East and the consequent link between the Israeli revolution and the development of the revolution in the Arab East as a whole. They cannot understand the positive aspects of the national liberation movement of the Arab world and the revolutionary potential that exists in those movements. . . . For them, nationalism is something bad, and they will have nothing to do with it. Although they say Jewish nationalism is bad too, they just ignore it. They say they have to go to the Israeli workers and organize them for the revolution—and that's all."²⁷

In 1973 the Workers Alliance suffered a split because it refused to take Egypt's side in the Yom Kippur War. The element which broke away formed the Palestine Communist Group under the leadership of Yigal Schwartz, which in April 1979 merged with the United Secretariat's Israeli affiliate.²⁸

In 1976 the Workers Alliance was described as being "more orthodoxly Trotsky-

ite than the RCL." Among its leading figures at that time was Menahem Karmi. It was said that "its attitudes are not very different from the RCL's, although its propaganda is more intensely and apparently . . . worker-oriented." Also, the Workers Alliance was said to proclaim even more frankly than the RCL that it was "a partner in the Palestinian struggle for National Liberation." Its monthly organ was *Voice of the Worker*, which was published in Jerusalem in both Hebrew and Arabic, and was edited by Menahem Karmi. The periodical was distributed chiefly among urban workers. *Vanguard*, the WA's theoretical organ, was published irregularly in Hebrew and was also edited by Menahem Karmi. It was reported that the Workers Alliance "tends to emphasize opposition to capitalism more than opposition to Zionism."²⁹ The Workers Alliance remained affiliated with CORQI until 1978, when it was excluded from that group.³⁰

The Revolutionary Communist League

In February 1972 there was a second split in the ISO when a national assembly of the organization adopted a program which has been described as being "very close to Trotskyism."³¹ The development of this split was described by Michel Warshawski: "We had a political discussion in the organization and concluded that if the theory of permanent revolution is valid in the Arab East, it must be valid throughout the underdeveloped world. When we asked the organization to broaden its program, to be not just anti-Zionist, but to develop a general political program, a part of the group objected and subsequently split."

According to Warshawski this split in Matzpen was more serious than the earlier one had been since the splitters included "a large minority, including a large part of the old leadership." Also, since those who broke away continued to use the organization's

name the remaining pro-Trotskyist majority began to call themselves ISO (Marxist).

A communique issued by the ISO (Marxist) on March 6, 1972, explaining the division in the organization, claimed that those who had broken away "leaned towards anarchist positions." Furthermore, they had "violated organizational discipline and undertook a campaign of defamation [both inside and outside the ISO] against the Trotskyist comrades in the ISO."

The communique ended by claiming that "from now on we will set ourselves to the task, essential for the future of the socialist revolution in the region, of bolstering our organization ideologically and increasing its capability of action. This will allow us to become active participants in building the revolutionary-Marxist organization of the Arab East."³²

In October 1972 the ISO (Marxist) held its first congress. The most important decisions of this meeting were to declare the organization's loyalty to the principles of Trotskyism, and to apply for membership in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.³³

At the time of the Yom Kippur War in October 1973 the Political Bureau of the ISO (Marxist) issued a statement, the key passages of which were that "for us the responsibility for this war, like all the wars that have gone before, falls above all on Israel: because it has conquered territories and has no intention of giving them back; because it plunders, expels, and oppresses the Palestinian Arab people, and it has to expect that the Arab masses will do all they can to restore the Palestinians' rights; because it has taken on itself the role of imperialism's policeman in the region, and its arrogant policy results in provoking even the ruling classes of the Arab East."³⁴

The main theoretician of the ISO in its early years was Jabra Nicola, who died in London late in 1974. He was a veteran Arab member of the Communist Party until the 1940s. After 1963 he was one of the leading

figures of the ISO, writing under the pseudonym of Abu Sa'd.³⁵

The Third Congress of the ISO (Marxist), held in February 1975, changed the name of the organization to Revolutionary Communist League. The congress was preceded by a considerable period of discussion and polemics, and in its sessions, "on all points where two opposing resolutions were presented, the discussion time was divided equally between the two tendencies." After seven hours of debate at the congress, three basic documents were adopted, all of which had been proposed by the "Revolutionary Communist Tendency": "The document 'The Arab Revolution, Balance Sheet and Perspectives,' prepared by the leadership of the groups supporting the Fourth International in the whole Arab region; some brief theses added to this document, to clarify certain points, the theses on Israeli society and the class struggle in Israel." Also, a resolution on organization was unanimously adopted by the Third Congress. It was reported that that document "put forward the following priorities for our political work: stepping up our activity in propaganda and political education, directing our intervention more toward the masses and no longer primarily toward the student youth, gearing our newspaper to this objective, and reorganizing the structures of the organization."³⁶

At its Fourth Congress in September 1976 the most important document adopted by the Revolutionary Communist League was one defining its attitude towards the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO):

The PLO is the framework that unifies the organizations struggling against Zionist rule. As such the revolutionary Marxists support the PLO unconditionally and its struggle against the Zionist regime. Moreover we, revolutionary Marxists operating under the Zionist regime itself, consider ourselves an integral part of the PLO. . . . In the framework of the Palestin-

ian liberation movement and the National Council we will act as a well-defined political current, presenting a political proletarian alternative for Palestinians and Jews as well, and in the wider context of the whole Arab region an alternative to the actual PLO leadership.³⁷

At its Fifth Congress in April 1979 the Revolutionary Communist League merged with the Palestine Communist Group. There had been discussions between the two groups for about two years and the resolutions adopted at the merger congress were agreed upon in advance by representatives of both. The meeting received messages of greeting from the Lebanese section of the United Secretariat and from the Union of Communists in Syria, "a group that has very broad programmatic agreement with the RCL."³⁸

By the end of 1982 the Revolutionary Communist League had branches in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa. It was led by a Central Committee of eleven members and published not only the Hebrew-language *Matzpen* (selling 500 copies an issue) but also a monthly in Arabic, *Sharara*, with a sale of about 1500 each month. From time to time it also published a theoretical journal, *Unamio* in Arabic and *International* in Hebrew. Its small publishing group, Red Pages, had by late 1982 put out more than thirty-five pamphlets, in both Hebrew and Arabic.³⁹

In July 1982 the Revolutionary Communist League suffered a split. At issue appears to have been the growing controversy which was by then developing between the United Secretariat and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. The group sympathizing with the SWP broke away to form what they called Revolutionary Communist League (Turn). The original RCL continued to be regarded by the United Secretariat as its Israeli section, while the SWP began to refer to the RCL (Turn) as "a public faction of the Israeli section of the Fourth Interna-

tional."⁴⁰ The RCL (Turn) began to issue a periodical called *Spark*.⁴¹

The Revolutionary Communist League was very active in organizing protests against the Lebanese War of 1982, and in the Peace Now Movement. Subsequently, Michel Warshawski argued, "We were not alone in this work, but we played a very determinant role."

By the beginning of 1985, the RCL was said to have "around fifty members."⁴²

Italian Trotskyism

Italian Trotskyism has been distinctive within the international movement for having throughout most of its existence to deal not only with the Stalinist-Communists and Socialists characteristic of most countries, but with a rival "left opposition" group occupying more or less the same space as Trotskyism in the national political spectrum. It interacted and conflicted with this group, the followers of Amadeo Bordiga, not only in the 1930s, when Italian Trotskyism consisted only of a handful of exiles, but also subsequent to World War II, when both groups were able to organize on Italian soil.

Italian Trotskyism has also been one of the few segments of the movement which has had a serious experience with "entrism" in the Communist Party. However, overall Trotskyism has remained a relatively tiny minority within the Italian Left.

Bordiga and the Bordigists

Amadeo Bordiga had been a left-wing Socialist with anarchosyndicalist inclinations before World War I. During the war he emerged as one of the principal spokesmen for the Left of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), and was a strong supporter of the Bolshevik Revolution. In December 1918 he established a newspaper in Naples, *Il Soviet*. In the following year, at the Bologna Congress of the PSI, he led a "communist-abstentionist" faction which favored abstention from electoral and parliamentary activity, a position strongly opposed by Lenin in his pamphlet *Left-Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder*. Bordiga was a delegate of the PSI to the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920 and was coreporter on the parliamentary issue to the congress.

At the founding congress of the Italian

Communist Party (PCI), at Leghorn in January 1921, Amadeo Bordiga emerged as its principal leader, being one of the five members of its executive committee and with his followers having a majority on the central committee. He was elected to the International Control Commission of the Comintern at its Third Congress.

However, the Third Congress provoked Bordiga's dissidence with Comintern positions. He opposed its general adoption of a united front tactic although approving of it on a trade union level. Nevertheless, at the Second Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) he was chosen as an alternate member of ECCI, being promoted to the ECCI Presidium soon after the Fourth Comintern Congress. That post was confirmed at the Fifth Congress in 1924.

Bordiga's left-wing position was arousing opposition both within the PCI and the Comintern. At the Fifth Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI in 1925 he was severely criticized and was compared to Trotsky. Finally, in January 1926, at the PCI Congress held in Lyon, France (because the party had been illegalized by Mussolini), Bordiga lost control of the party to the coalition headed by Gramsci and Togliatti.

At the Sixth Plenum of the ECCI in 1926, Bordiga strongly criticized Comintern policy. On his return to Italy he was arrested and imprisoned on Lipari. He was released in 1930, but at about the same time was expelled, together with his followers, from the PCI, being accused of "factionalism" and "Trotskyism."¹

Meanwhile, supporters of Bordiga among the Italian Communists in exile had organized their own groupings. They were particularly concentrated in France and Belgium, where they worked with other elements disenchanted with the increasingly Stalinized Comintern.

The Bordigists at first viewed with considerable enthusiasm Leon Trotsky's efforts, after his exile from the Soviet Union, to bring together the Left Opposition Commu-

nists in Europe and elsewhere. Trotsky was also at first attracted to them.

The Bordigists published in mid-1929 an open letter to Trotsky in their periodical *Promoteo*. In reply to this, and apparently to the receipt from the Bordigists of a copy of a Platform of the Left which their faction had issued in 1926 and various issues of *Promoteo*, Trotsky wrote on September 25, 1929, "A Letter to the Italian Left Communists" directed to the Bordigists. This rather extensive letter was extremely cordial.

Trotsky commented at the beginning of this letter that "I am of the opinion that at least our agreement on basic questions is quite far-reaching." He added: "If I do not now express myself more categorically it is only because I want to leave to time and events the verification of our ideological closeness and mutual understanding. I hope that they prove to be complete and firm."

Trotsky wrote his correspondents that their 1926 document had "produced a great impression on me." He added that he thought that "it is one of the best documents published by the international Opposition and it preserves its significance in many things to this very day."²

For a short while the Bordigists became associated with the International Left Opposition organized under Trotsky's aegis. Trotsky reported in April 1930 that "in relation to the International Left Opposition the Bordigists remain a sympathizing group."³ In the following month he wrote to his Russian followers that "the Italian comrades have written us that Bordiga, having acquainted himself with our latest publications, did indeed make a statement, it seems, about his agreement with our views."⁴

But at the same time that Trotsky was thus publicly claiming the adherence of Bordiga and his followers to the International Left Opposition, a wide divergence was in fact developing between him and the Bordigists. This was clear in a letter which Trotsky wrote to the editorial board of *Promoteo*, dated June 19, 1930.

Trotsky was answering a letter from the Bordigists of June 3, 1930, which, he comments, "instead of dispelling misunderstandings . . . increases them." He denied that he had shifted his position since his earlier letter to them in September 1929. Rather, he said, "At that time a certain amount of vagueness in your position could have appeared as episodic, and in part even unavoidable." It might have been explained by Bordiga's being kept virtually under house arrest but, Trotsky noted "this consideration cannot cover all the others. . . . Today the conservative vagueness of your position is become a more and more dangerous symptom."

Trotsky went on to lament the failure of the Bordigists to participate in the organizing meeting of the International Left Opposition in Paris two months earlier, and observed that the Bordigists' reticence to participate fully in the international group could not be justified in terms of the International Left Opposition lacking a full-fledged program, as the Bordigists had suggested. Rather, Trotsky said, they should participate in elaborating that program.

Finally, Trotsky answered their complaint about his dealing with a new opposition group which had appeared within the Italian Communist Party. He suggested that they should welcome that rallying of new recruits to the ranks of the Left Opposition rather than lamenting it.⁵

By early 1931 Trotsky was apparently becoming convinced that matters of principle differentiated him and his followers from the Bordigists, if not from Bordiga himself. In "Critical Remarks about *Promoteo's* Resolution on Democratic Demands," dated January 15, 1931, Trotsky was apparently convinced that the Bordigists were reverting to their leader's original sin of opposition to parliamentarism and as a consequence were opposing any use of democratic slogans as a political tactic.

Trotsky wrote that "the Bordigists evince an inverse parliamentary cretinism by apparently completely reducing the problem

of democracy to the question of the national assembly and of parliament in general. But even within the limits of the parliamentary frame of reference they are completely in the wrong. Their antidemocratic metaphysics inevitably implies the tactic of boycotting parliament. . . . It would not be a bad thing to ask the Bordigists outright whether they are for a boycott or for participation in parliament. . . ."⁶

By May 1932 Trotsky was convinced that he and his followers and the Bordigists had little in common. In a document on "Who Should Attend the International Conference," dated May 22, 1932, he wrote: "The Italian Promoteo group was and still is an alien body inside the Left Opposition. The Promoteo group is bound by its own internal discipline with regard to the International Left and does not permit the propagation within its ranks of our fundamental views . . . in the publications of the Bordigists themselves there are enough documents and articles to prove conclusively and completely that the Bordigists have forgotten nothing and learned nothing and that according to their basic views they do not belong to the International Left Opposition."⁷

The final separation of the Bordigists from the ILO came about at the "consultation" of Trotsky with followers from several countries which took place during his short visit to Denmark late in 1932. Reporting on that meeting Trotsky wrote: "The consultation had sufficient authority in the sense of reflecting the true views of the International Left. It expressed itself in favor of immediate liquidation of the fictitious tie between the Bordigists and the Bolshevik-Leninists. We hope that the national sections will express their agreement with the view of the consultation and thereby transform it into a final decision."⁸

The New Italian Opposition (NOI)

The place of the Bordigists within the International Left Opposition was taken by what

was known as the New Italian Opposition (NOI). It consisted principally of people who had been closely linked with Antonio Gramsci within the Italian Communist Party's leadership, and were eliminated from the PCI by the Comintern and its principal Italian functionary, Palmiro Togliatti, because of opposition to the leftist excesses of the Third Period insofar as they affected the Italian party.

Three figures were of most importance in this New Italian Opposition. One of these was Pietro Tresso, who also went under the pseudonym Blasco. He had been a founding member of the PCI and was a member of its delegation to the Fourth Comintern Congress in November 1922. He may also have attended the Fifth Congress in 1924. At the Lyon Congress of the PCI in 1926, he was elected to the party's Central Committee. He was charged, together with Camilla Ravera, with the job of establishing a center in Rome for the underground party which could maintain liaison with the exile party leadership in Paris.

In October 1926 the Mussolini regime made massive arrests of underground Communists and in the following month Tresso, together with Ravera, Alfonso Leonetti, Paolo Ravazzoli, and Ignacio Silone, were named to try to reorganize the party's ranks inside Italy. However, with the Fascist secret police, the Ovla, hot on their trail, Tresso and his wife finally fled to Switzerland and thence to Paris, where he was soon a member of the Political Bureau of the PCI.⁹

The second member was Alfonso Leonetti, who used many aliases, including Feroci, Akros, Souza, and Saraceno, and had been a close collaborator with Gramsci in editing *Ordine Nuovo* in Turin, ultimately becoming its editor-in-chief. He also was elected to the Central Committee of the PCI at the Lyon Congress, and subsequently to its Political Bureau.

The third member of the New Italian Opposition leadership was Paolo Ravazzoli, a metallurgical worker from Milan who used

the pseudonyms Lino and Santina. As principal trade union leader of the PCI underground, he had become secretary general of the clandestine CGIL labor confederation. By 1930 he was also a member of the PCI Politburo and in exile in Paris.¹⁰

With both Antonio Gramsci and Amadeo Bordiga in jail in Italy, by early 1930 Palmiro Togliatti was the principal leader of the PCI, and was a functionary of the Comintern in Moscow. Togliatti, who had for a while been associated with Bukharin, along with Angelo Tasca, was under considerable pressure from the Stalinist apparatus in the Comintern.

Although Togliatti partially rehabilitated himself in September 1929 by engineering the unanimous decision of the PCI Central Committee to expel Tasca from the party, he felt the need to make the PCI conform more closely to the far-Left lurch of the Comintern at the beginning of the Third Period. In December, his close ally, Luigi Longo, introduced a proposal to virtually liquidate the exile operation of the party and to transfer its headquarters back to Italy. Leonetti, Ravazzoli, and Tresso opposed this strongly, and were supported by Ignazio Silone.¹¹

In the same vein, Togliatti had published in the January 1930 issue of *Ordine Nuovo*, the PCI paper, an article which called upon the party "to pass concretely to the preparation for armed struggle."¹²

Upon Togliatti's return from an enlarged plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, held in Moscow in February 1930, there was a bitter struggle in a new meeting of the Central Committee of the PCI, March 20-23. Togliatti issued a call there for "a political mass strike" against the Mussolini regime and his opponents accused him of "adventurism." However, the net result of the meeting was the expulsion of Tresso, Leonetti, and Ravazzoli from the Political Bureau, of Silone from the Central Committee, and of Amadeo Bordiga from the party.

In the following month Tresso, Leonetti, and Ravazzoli made contact with Alfred Rosmer, who published in the April 25, 1930, issue of *Verité* an article by Leonetti (under a pseudonym) strongly attacking Togliatti and other PCI leaders. Two weeks later the three wrote to Trotsky himself.

As a consequence of all of this, an enlarged plenum of the PCI Central Committee on June 9 saw Tresso delivering what E. H. Carr has called "a defiant declaration." Leonetti and Ravazzoli had already been removed from the Central Committee, so Tresso was the only vote counted against a motion to expel him, Ravazzoli, and Leonetti from the PCI.¹³

Shortly after their expulsion the three leaders, together with R. Recchia, at time still a candidate member of the PCI Central Committee, published in *Verité* an "Open Letter of the New Italian Opposition." According to E. H. Carr this letter "denounced 'the profoundly false and opportunist' line of the party leaders, and the policies of Comintern. They rejected the prognosis of an immediate and inevitable transition in Italy from Fascism to the dictatorship of the proletariat. They demanded free discussion of disputed questions in the party, and the reinstatement of those expelled in the past for defending Bordiga's position (though not apparently of Bordiga himself, whose expulsion they themselves had so recently endorsed); and they declared their solidarity with the International Left Opposition."¹⁴

There is no indication of how many other exiled Italian Communists joined the New Italian Opposition. However, it is certain that there were difficulties in maintaining a functioning Italian Trotskyist organization in exile. Factional conflicts within it had virtually brought its extinction by 1933; an effort to reorganize the group in 1934 was shortlived.¹⁵ A report to the Second Congress of the Fourth International in 1948 noted that by the beginning of World War II the Italian Trotskyist exile group "had come to a state of complete decomposition."¹⁶

There is also no information concerning the degree to which the Italian Trotskyists were able to maintain a clandestine organization inside Fascist Italy. According to Pierre Broué "There was little work—the difficulties were immense even for an apparatus disposing of great resources—in the direction of Italy."¹⁷

One recruit who was to be important during the 1930s and for a short while after World War II was Nicola di Bartolomeo, better known under the name Fosco. He had been a member of the PCI since its establishment in 1921, had been jailed by the Mussolini government between 1922 and 1926. Upon his release, Bartolomeo went to France where he joined the Bordigists, as a consequence of which he was expelled from the PCI in 1928. However, he was also excluded from the Bordigist group and joined the New Italian Opposition in 1930.¹⁸

The three principal leaders of the NOI apparently involved themselves in different aspects of the international Trotskyist movement. Pierre Broué has noted that "Ravazzoli devoted himself to work within the Italian emigration in France, Blasco was active in the French League, and Leonetti in the International Secretariat."¹⁹ However, this delineation of activities was not necessarily strictly adhered to. Thus, Pietro Tresso was one of two delegates of the International Left Opposition—the other being Pierre Naville—to the conference in Paris organized by the London Bureau in September 1933, where the idea of establishing the Fourth International was first strongly put forth by the Trotskyists.²⁰ Also, both Leonetti and Tresso were present at the "consultation" organized at the time of Trotsky's visit to Copenhagen late in 1932.²¹

During most of the 1930s Alfonso Leonetti was a member of the International Secretariat. He took a very active part, and one of considerable consequence, in that body. Broué has credited him with first proposing the new name for the International Left Opposition after it had come out in favor of establishing a Fourth International. That

name, Internationalist Communist League, was strongly opposed at first by Trotsky, who thought that it was a tautology. It was ultimately adopted by the August 1933 plenum of the group, however.²²

Leonetti met with Trotsky on at least two occasions. One was in Copenhagen in November 1932. The other was in 1933, while Trotsky was living near Royan, France, where Leonetti went in his capacity as a member of the IS.²³ Also, on at least one occasion Leonetti engaged in some exchange of letters with Trotsky concerning the nature of the fascist regime in Italy.²⁴

One of Leonetti's responsibilities in the International Secretariat, at least part of the time, was handling the troubled relations with the Spanish section. The Spanish oppositionists felt that he bore a considerable part of the responsibility for the split which developed between them and Trotsky and his international movement. Ignacio Iglesias, one-time leader of the oppositionists in the Asturias region, wrote that in that conflict "one of those who most distinguished himself was the Italian Alfonso Leonetti—alias Martin, alias Feroci, alias Akros, alias Suzo, alias Guido Baracena—who changed names like shirts, undoubtedly because he thought it was very Bolshevik. . . ."²⁵

Those of the New Italian Opposition who were active in the French section became involved in its internecine disputes and to some degree at least were victims of those conflicts. Apparently that factionalism was crucial to the temporary expulsion of Tresso, Bartolomeo, and others from the movement early in 1933.

Trotsky himself became involved in that incident. He wrote on April 29, 1933, that "I have not received any document about the exclusion of Blasco and the others. . . . I have not heard of any divergence in principle. Apparently the basis of the conflict is in the relations between the NOI and the League. If this is correct, we must make serious concessions to the NOI. . . . It seems to me that false declarations have been made with regard to the question of the NOI and

erroneous measures have also been taken, and that that can only profoundly offend the sensibilities of emigré circles. It is necessary to correct these mistakes. . . ."²⁶ The expulsion of Tresso and the others was cancelled by the International Secretariat.²⁷

Another Italian Trotskyist who became involved with the factional disputes of the French section was Nicola di Bartolomeo (Fosco). He aligned himself with the Molinier-Frank faction after 1935 when they were in conflict with Trotsky and the International Secretariat. He also established in 1934 a dissident Italian Trotskyist group which edited a paper, *La Nostra Parola*.²⁸

Early in 1936 Bartolomeo was expelled from France and went to Catalonia where he was arrested and jailed, but was freed as a result of agitation by the POUM. With the outbreak of the Civil War he was assigned by the POUM to handle relations with foreign parties and with foreigners who came to join the POUMist ranks.

In this capacity Bartolomeo was influenced by factional considerations. He arranged Molinier's visit to Barcelona. He is also said to have suggested to Andrés Nin and Juan Andrade that they invite Kurt Landau to come to the Catalan capital; and to have advised Nin (while he was a member of the Catalan government) not to accept Leon Sedov's bid to join the POUM militia.²⁹ Bartolomeo was also responsible for convincing the POUMists to publish articles by Trotsky in *La Batalla* and other party publications.³⁰

During World War II at least some of the exiled Italian Trotskyists were victims of the conflict. One was Pietro Tresso, who was jailed by the Vichy government, escaped in a Maquis operation, but then was probably murdered by the Stalinists who led the particular underground group which had originally "liberated" him.³¹ Others active in the prewar Italian Trotskyist movement dropped out after World War II. Alfonso Leonetti ended up rejoining the Communist Party in 1962.³² Ravazzoli was not active in postwar politics.³³

It was principally Nicola di Bartolomeo (Fosco) who was responsible for reviving Italian Trotskyism after World War II, this time in the peninsula itself. At the end of the Spanish Civil War Fosco had returned to France, where he was soon arrested and sent in September 1939 to the French Verneté concentration camp. After the surrender of France he was turned over to the Mussolini regime and was deported to the island of Tremiti.

In 1943 Fosco organized in Tremiti a collective of deported Trotskyists. This was the core out of which the first Trotskyist group in Italy grew. A bit later he formed in Naples a National Provisional Center for the Constitution of the Internationalist Communist Party (IV International), which on December 15, 1943, published an appeal "To the Workers of the Whole World."

The new Trotskyist group was concentrated in southern Italy, particularly in Naples, Bartolomeo's home city. There it soon entered into contact with foreign Trotskyists. In 1944 sailors belonging to the Shachtmanite Workers Party of the United States established relations with the incipient Italian Trotskyist movement and Fosco had a correspondence with Max Shachtman.

Another important foreign Trotskyist who entered into contact with the Italians was Charles Van Gelderen, a British soldier who belonged to the British Revolutionary Communist Party. He first met a group of Italian Socialists, who asked him to give a talk to their local party group. Although Van Gelderen did not mention either Trotsky or Trotskyism in his talk, the few Trotskyists in the group figured out from what he did say that he was one of them. A few days later he was visited by a U.S. military policeman, who was a Shachtmanite and had apparently been informed about him by the Trotskyists in Van Gelderen's audience. He put Van Gelderen in touch with the local Trotskyist group.

At that point, Nicola di Bartolomeo was

very active in the Socialist Party, and had a good deal of influence in its Naples organization, where he was in charge of Socialist trade union work. Van Gelderen and a few others began to raise money for Bartolomeo and his associates, mainly through dealing in the black market. Soon both the Shachtmanites and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States also sent them some money, and the Trotskyists were able to launch a newspaper, *Il Militante*.

The Italian Trotskyists' first experiment with entrism lasted only a few months. By the end of 1945 they had taken the step—which Van Gelderen thought was a mistake—of pulling out their members from the Socialist Party in spite of their growing influence in the organization. They also pulled out the few members that they had in the Communist Party. They established their own organization, the Partito Comunista Internazionale.

Van Gelderen also had contacts with the Bordigists in the Naples region, and even had a talk with Bordiga himself, whom he found exceedingly sectarian. Van Gelderen tried to win over some of the local Bordigists to Trotskyism, and his most important convert was Libero Villone, who was to be editor of the Trotskyists' periodical *Bandiera Rosa*.³⁴

In this same period there were various people who broke away to the Left from both the Communist and Socialist parties. In the Naples area, they formed a provisional organization. However, the new Trotskyist group did not associate itself with this coalition.³⁵

Meanwhile, within the newly revived Italian Communist Party, the Puglia Federation, influenced by the tradition of Amadeo Bordiga, came forth with a proclamation in favor of the formation of a Fourth International. At that point they were clearly not aware of the existence of the Trotskyist international organization.

Before the complete suppression of the PCI by the Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini,

the Puglia Federation of the party had been aligned with Bordiga. Apparently whatever underground organization had continued thereafter had continued to be Bordigist. Subsequent to the collapse of the Fascist regime the Federation was still controlled by the followers of Bordiga.³⁶ It was again Charles Van Gelderen who, although a British soldier, got leave and went to Foggia in mid-1944 to confer with Romeo Mangano, leader of the Puglia Federation of the PCI. This discussion laid the basis for unification of the Bordigist elements of Puglia and the Trotskyist nucleus in the Naples area.³⁷

The Partito Operaio Comunista (Bolscevico-Leninista)

In February 1945 the Trotskyists and the Bordigists of the Puglia region joined forces to establish the Partito Operaio Comunista (Bolscevico-Leninista). The unification of the two groups was not preceded by any extensive discussion of possible disagreements on programmatic or theoretical issues. The Bordigists may well have known little or nothing about the positions of the Trotskyist Fourth International at the time of the establishment of POC(B-L). Certainly the Trotskyists were anxious to establish a party with some mass base which could extend into central and northern Italy, and were more or less sure that they would be able to impose their ideological orientation and "rectify" the errors of the followers of Bordiga. In any case, the distinction between the two groups which formed the POC(B-L) were never overcome.

Almost immediately, the POC sought recognition by the Fourth International as its Italian section. The headquarters of the FI was then still in the United States. At that point it had little direct contact with the European Trotskyist movement, and its principal source of information on the Italian situation was apparently Nicola di Bartolomeo, with whom Jean van Heijenoort and other officials of the International in

New York were acquainted. Although the International Secretariat had some doubts about the POC they finally ended up recognizing it as the Italian section of the Fourth International.³⁸

During its first phase, so long as Nicola di Bartolomeo was its principal figure, the POC was controlled nationally by the Trotskyists, although the Puglia Federation operated more or less autonomously, without paying too much attention to the activities of the national organization. Late in 1945 the party issued a legal periodical for the first time. However, in January 1946, Fosco died.

In April 1946 the International Conference of the FI was held in Paris. At that meeting the POC asked for aid in resolving the party's internal problems. As a consequence, a representative of the International visited Italy, but without any significant results. Subsequently, in October 1946, Romeo Mangano was invited to attend a meeting of the International Executive Committee. At that session Mangano agreed to conform to the programmatic position of the International in a document signed by him and by Bruno for the national leadership of the POC.

Part of this agreement was that the headquarters of the party be moved to Milan, to facilitate its work among the industrial proletariat of the northern part of the country. However, lack of financial resources (promised help from the International was at best intermittent) and disillusionment with internal conflicts upon the part of several of those who were supposed to man the new national headquarters, nullified the best intentions of the Trotskyists, both in the POC and the International Secretariat. It was reported to the 1948 Congress of the Fourth International that by late 1946 "The party was on the verge of ceasing all organized activity."

At that point Romeo Mangano took the initiative to call a National Organization Conference of the POC over protests of the International Secretariat. Meeting during

the winter of 1946-47, that conference elected a new Political Bureau and Central Committee, neither of which included any of the Trotskyist faction of the party.³⁹

During the following year, until the Second World Congress of the Fourth International at the beginning of 1948, relations between the Mangano leadership of the POC and the IS deteriorated rapidly. In the summer of 1947 a delegate from the International met with the POC Central Committee and reportedly "understood the disaster for the International represented by the policy of Mangano which was being represented under its banner."⁴⁰ After that meeting the IS undertook seriously to undermine the influence of Mangano within the Italian party.

The "Resolution on the POC of Italy" passed by the Second World Congress indicated the programmatic differences of the Mangano leadership with the Fourth International. These included Mangano's insistence that only the first two congresses of the Comintern were worthy of endorsement, the deterioration of the Third International having commenced, according to him, with the Third Congress rather than the Fifth, as maintained by the Trotskyists. Other "heretical" positions of the POC leadership were insistence that both Socialist and Communist parties were "bourgeois", the belief that the USSR was "imperialist" (on a par with the United States in that regard), and rejection of the concept of "democratic centralism."⁴¹

The Second World Congress of the Fourth International formally declared that the POC was no longer its Italian affiliate. It also urged the real Trotskyists in the POC to join together around a new periodical which was about to appear, to lay the basis for a new Italian affiliate of the FI.⁴²

The Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari's First Two Decades

A minority of the leaders and members of the POC, particularly in Naples and Milan,

remained loyal to the Fourth International. Among the principal figures in this minority were Libero Villone and Domenico Sedra, who had fought in the Spanish Civil War.

In the year after the expulsion of the POC from the FI, the POC minority joined with a group coming out of the Socialist Party to form a new organization which ultimately was recognized as the Italian section of the International. This was the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (Revolutionary Communist Group).

The principal recruit to Trotskyism from the Socialist ranks in this period was Livio Maitan, who was destined to become the principal leader of Italian Trotskyism. He had begun his political activity before the end of the Fascist regime, being first associated with the underground Partito d'Azione, an independent left-wing group. Maitan, a native of Venice, was at the time a student at the University of Padua.

In the summer of 1943 Maitan joined both the Socialist Party and its youth group, the FCS. At the same time he was active in the left-wing grouping within the Socialist ranks known as Iniziativa Socialista, in which, according to Maitan, there were some "vaguely Trotskyist elements."

When the Socialists split in 1946 Iniziativa and the FCS went with the Partito Socialista dei Lavoratori Italiani (PSLI), headed by Giuseppe Saragat. However, as Maitan has written, "Very rapidly, the left realized its mistake. Very much the majority with regard to the right [Saragat] at the moment of the split, it was submerged by new members and became clearly the minority. In addition, the greater part of the leaders themselves became right-wingers. It is after this evolution that the majority of the FCS—of which, in the meanwhile, I had become national secretary, broke with the new party [it was in the PSLI only about one year]."

By 1948 Maitan was leader of a small "pre-Trotskyist" group, the Movimento Socialista di Unità Proletaria. It participated in the Democratic Popular Front which was orga-

nized by the extreme left parties and groups for the 1948 election.

In 1949 the Trotskyist elements which had come out of the POC and the Socialist elements headed by Maitan joined to form the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (GCR). Maitan became Secretary of Organization of the GCR. In 1951 the GCR was accepted as the Italian section of the FI.⁴³

With the development of the split in the Fourth International in the early 1950s the GCR sided with the International Secretariat, headed by Michiel Pablo (Raptis). They also accepted the Pabloite thesis of carrying out entrism in the Communist Party.

It was during the doctrinal conflict of the 1950s that Livio Maitan became one of the principal leaders of the International Secretariat. By the end of the period (formation of the United Secretariat and of two dissident elements in 1962-63), Maitan was one of the three major figures at the head of the International Secretariat and subsequently of the United Secretariat. With the alienation of Michel Pablo from the leadership of the IS, Maitan joined Ernest Mandel and Pierre Frank as the trio who more or less dominated the largest faction of International Trotskyism.

The acceptance of the idea of entrism in the Communist Party did not go unchallenged within the GCR. Two leaders took the initiative in establishing a "Trotskyist Faction" within the organization. One of these was Libero Villone, the other Rado. This group held at least two national conferences. The second of these, in September 1955, voted to join the International Committee of the Fourth International, dominated by the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

Villone and Rado had two different tactical perspectives. Villone favored continuing the struggle against Pabloism within the ranks of the Italian section, and he died in the early 1970s a member of the GCR. Rado wanted to work outside the GCR, entered the Socialist ranks, and in the 1960s and early

1970s was a leader of the left-wing dissident Socialist group Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria, in Trieste.⁴⁴

Livio Maitan has written about the entrism experience of the 1950s and 1960s that "the GCR adopted the entrism orientation in 1951. Their militants worked about all in the PCI. More precisely, a part of the militants entered the PCI, where subsequently most recruits were made. During the whole 'entrism' period, which ended in 1968, we maintained an independent sector. The results of entrism are still the subject of debate and there are different points of view. Personally, I think that during a period entrism was positive and in Italy we have had the greatest success of any country of capitalist Europe (I refer to the CP's)."⁴⁵

Entrism continued for half a decade after the GCR became the Italian affiliate of the United Secretariat in 1963. During this entrism period the traditional animosity between Trotskyists and Stalinists seemed to have been somewhat ameliorated at least insofar as the two tendencies in Italy were concerned. This was indicated by the Communists' willingness on various occasions to engage in public debate with leading Trotskyists. For instance, in March 1962 Lucio Magri, member of the Milan regional secretariat of the Communist Party debated Maitan, at the time a member of the International Secretariat and secretary of the GCR. A few weeks later, Maitan debated a local Communist leader in Rome and a representative of the Socialist Party.⁴⁶

The end of entrism in Italy came as a consequence of the leftist upsurge of the later 1960s in which the students played a most important role, but which also influenced the labor movement. One of the groups which arose as a result of this upsurge was formed by dissidents from the Communist and Socialist parties, and from the Manifesto group of ex-PCI members which began to publish a periodical, *La Sinistra*, in 1967. In the following year it joined with the Trotskyists, both those who had been engag-

ing in entrism within the PCI and those who had maintained an independent organization.⁴⁷

Latter-day GCR and Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria

The end of the entrism experience brought about a major crisis within the ranks of the Italian Trotskyists. It is Maitan's opinion that the crisis arose because the decision to end the entrism policy came at least two years too late. As a consequence of this controversy "an important part of the leadership and the cadres quit to join the formations of the extreme left, particularly Avanguardia Operaia."⁴⁸

Elsewhere, Maitan has written about the gravity of the 1968-69 crisis in Italian Trotskyism. In 1972 he wrote that "the active intervention of Trotskyism as an organized political force in the Italian situation was very seriously hampered by the extremely grave crisis the organization suffered in the second half of 1968 and the beginning of 1969. During crucial months the organization was paralyzed, and later it was enormously restricted, not only in relation to the big mass movements, but also within the vanguard."⁴⁹

During the 1970s, the GCR rebuilt its ranks substantially. However, the basis on which it was reconstructed was largely via recruits brought into their ranks by the student revolt of the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁵⁰ Although there was penetration of some segments of the labor movement, the membership and leadership of the group came principally from the ranks of student activists. Meanwhile, the GCR had changed its name to Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria (LCR).

During the 1970s and early 1980s the GCR-LCR considered themselves as part of what they frequently referred to as "the vanguard." This consisted not only of their own organization, but a variety of other far left parties and groups, including Maoists, ex-

Maoists, and some others not easily catalogued. The Trotskyists tended to picture "the vanguard" as an alternative to the Socialists and Communists on the Left, to measure their own performance particularly in relation to that of other "vanguard" elements, and from time to time to seek various kinds of cooperation with those elements.

One can cite various examples of such cooperation. In January 1975 an anti-Vietnam War demonstration was held in Rome with the support of the GCR, Avanguardia Operaia, Potere Operaio, Viva il Comunismo, Il Comunista, Gruppo Gramsci, and the Communist Party of Italy (Marxist-Leninist).⁵¹ In the 1976 election the GCR collaborated with Proletarian Democracy, a coalition including Avanguardia Operai, Partido d'Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo, Lotta Continua, and various other far left elements. The GCR ran three candidates on the Proletarian Democracy ticket.⁵²

In an interview published in 1977 Maitan sketched the importance which the Trotskyists gave to their particular "vanguard" orientation: "Beginning with the 1970 and 1971 national congresses, we worked out a strategy for building the revolutionary party as the outcome of a three-part 'movement': gathering together the vanguard groups around coherent platforms based on a common experience in struggle; attracting the worker and student vanguards around this pole; and developing the antibureaucratic and antireformist consciousness of those working class sectors that are under the influence of the traditional parties."⁵³

There are no membership statistics available for the GCR/LCR. However, its strength is said to have been centered in the north, including the cities of Turin, Milan, Genoa, and Brescia. Its principal center in central Italy was Rome, and in the south it had some membership in Taranto.⁵⁴

It was not until 1973 that the GCR decided to orient its activities towards the organized labor movement.⁵⁵ It certainly did not be-

come a major element in the trade unions. However, it has been reported that the LCR had "good influence" in several factories, including the Fiat plant in Turin, the Alfa Romeo, Imperial, and Face Standard factories in Milan, and the Italsider plant in Taranto. At one time, in 1969-70, it also had considerable influence in the labor movement in the southern port of Bari. This did not result in any long-term strength for the Trotskyist movement in that region, and after 1973 a number of the Trotskyist trade union cadres from Bari were sent to work in Milan, Florence, and other cities.⁵⁶

Other Trotskyist Groups in Italy

Although the GCR-LCR has been the longest-lived and probably largest group in Italy proclaiming loyalty to Trotskyism, it has by no means been the only one. Most other major elements in the world movement have had some representation in the country.

The oldest non-usec Trotskyist group in Italy was the Partido Comunista Rivoluzionario (Trotskyista), affiliated with the Posadas version of the Fourth International. At least in its early years, the Italian group was less prone than most of the Posadas parties to devote its time exclusively to the writings of J. Posadas. For example, the August 10, 1964, issue of its newspaper, *Lotta Operaia*, although containing one two-page article of Posadas on contemporary Brazilian events, was taken up largely with analysis of contemporary Italian political developments, including the Communist Party's "betrayal" of a supposed workers movement to occupy key factories, and the evolution of the left-wing Socialist party, the PSIUP, with which the Posadas people apparently had substantial contact. As late as 1975, the Posadas Fourth International still reported that *Lotta Operaia* was appearing as the organ of its Italian affiliate.⁵⁷ We have no further information about the evolution of the group.

At least two of the dissident Italian Trots-

kyist groups arose from factional controversies within the United Secretariat during the 1970s. One was the Lega Comunista. In the USEC controversies of that period, in addition to the International Majority Tendency led by Ernest Mandel, Livio Maitan, and Pierre Frank and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency aligned with the Socialist Workers Party of the U.S., there was a Revolutionary Marxist Fraction, which was represented at the 1974 Tenth World Congress of USEC by an Italian delegate, Roberto Massari. In 1975 Massari led a split in the GCR/LCR to form the Lega Comunista. It took the lead in organizing outside of USEC an "international opposition" to the United Secretariat, the Necessary International Initiative (NII), with affiliates in Great Britain and Germany as well as Italy. As late as 1980, the Lega Comunista still existed.⁵⁸

The second split in Italian Trotskyism resulting from the quarrels of the 1970s within USEC was the formation of the Lega Socialista Rivoluzionaria (LSR). It was formed by Italian elements aligned with the International Bolshevik Fraction led by the Argentine Nahuel Moreno, when that group broke with the United Secretariat in 1979-80. However, in a congress in July 1982 the LSR decided to withdraw from the Moreno international faction and to assume an independent position.⁵⁹

Another Italian group which by the early 1980s was unaffiliated with any of the international Trotskyite tendencies was the Revolutionary Workers Group for the Rebirth of the Fourth International (Gruppo Operaio Rivoluzionario per la rinascita della Quarta Internazionale—GOR). Its origins were in a split from the GCR in 1976 of people opposed to participation in the Proletarian Democracy electoral coalition of that year on the grounds that it was a "popular front."

These dissidents first organized as the Bolshevik-Leninist Group for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. They soon established contacts with the ex-Lambertist Italian organization, the Bolshevik-Leninist

Group of Italy, but the two organizations found it impossible to agree on unity terms.

The 1976 dissidents from the GCR then decided in April 1978 to reorganize as the Lega Trotskista d'Italia (LTI). By that time they had entered into contact with the international Spartacist tendency [sic] and the LTI had fraternal delegates at the August 1979 conference of the ist in London. However, controversies resulting from that encounter led first to the formation within the Lega Trotskista d'Italia of the Internationalist Proletarian Opposition, which in April 1980 broke away from the Lega to establish the Grupo Operaio Rivoluzionario per la rinascita della Quarta Internazionale.⁶⁰ Although thereafter unaffiliated with any international alignment, the GOR did issue a call for a "genuine" international Trotskyist tendency.⁶¹

The Spartacist tendency originated in Italy in 1975. At a "European encampment" of the ist in July 1975, a group of Italian participants who had recently broken with Roberto Massari's Revolutionary Marxist Fraction announced the establishment of the Spartacist Nucleus of Italy.⁶² It apparently became part of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia when that was established in 1976, and gained control of that group. In August 1980, it was formally announced that the LTI was becoming the Italian Sympathizing Section of the ist.⁶³

The Italian Spartacists were centered principally in Milan. From there they issued a monthly periodical, *Spartaco*, which consisted principally of translations of articles from the New York Spartacist newspaper *Workers Vanguard*. From time to time they organized "debate assemblies" on subjects of current interest.

Still another international Trotskyist tendency to be represented in Italy at least for a time was the International Trotskyist Liaison Committee, the so-called Thornett group. The Gruppo Bolscevico Leninista (GBL) had originally been part of the Lambertist CORQI but broke with that group in

Trotskyism in Jamaica

1975 over the issue of the Lambertists' violent denunciations of Varga and his followers at the time they broke with CORQI. Although for a while indicating some attraction to the Spartacists, the Gruppo Bolscevico Leninista finally ended up in 1960 joining with the Workers Socialist League of Great Britain and a few other groups to establish the Liaison Committee.⁶⁴

The GBL changed its name to Lega Operaia Rivoluzionaria, and by the early 1980s was working more or less closely with the United Secretariat's Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria. There were some discussions between the two groups of the possibility of unity, but by the end of 1983 these discussions did not seem likely to result in their proximate unification.⁶⁵

Conclusion

Trotskyism has never been a major force in general Italian politics, or even on the Italian Left. It has persisted as an element in the Far Left since before the end of World War II. Both in the 1930s and during the forty years after the Second World War, it provided important leadership for the international Trotskyist movement.

Trotskyism first appeared in the West Indian island nation of Jamaica in the form of the Revolutionary Marxist League (RML), in the late 1970s. However, the RML was not affiliated with any of the major tendencies of International Trotskyism. Its only overseas connection was with the Revolutionary Socialist League of the United States, an offshoot of the more or less "Shachtmanite" International Socialist dissidence of the Trotskyist movement.

In one issue of its newspaper, *Forward*, the RML proclaimed that "Our Aim is: 1. The creation of an independent international revolutionary workers' party with the RML as its Jamaican section. 2. The overthrow of capitalism in Jamaica and world wide. 3. The establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat [working class] in Jamaica and internationally, leading ultimately to communism."¹

In the 1980 election the RML opposed both of the major parties which were competing. An electoral supplement to its periodical was headlined "No to PNP, No to JLP! Don't Vote! Build the RML, Build the Revolutionary Workers' Party!"²

In October 1981, the RML held its second congress. It was attended by two representatives of the Revolutionary Socialist League of the United States. The congress also ratified "acceptance of a declaration of fusion of the RML and the RSL as a single international revolutionary tendency."³

Japanese Trotskyism

Militarist domination of Japan during the 1930s and the complete suppression of all political parties after 1937 help to explain why Trotskyism did not take root in that country until after World War II. About a decade after the end of that conflict a small Trotskyist organization emerged among Communist Party dissidents, with its base particularly in the student movement. It became affiliated with the United Secretariat, the only international tendency which has had any organization in Japan.

As early as May 1949 the New York Trotskyite newspaper *Militant* announced that "the Secretariat of the Fourth International has announced through its press service that a Trotskyist organization has recently been formed for the first time in Japan." It added that "the Japanese Trotskyists have taken the first steps with a decision to issue a regular publication . . . as well as to publish the most important works of Trotsky in the Japanese language."¹

This unnamed organization apparently did not survive. It was not until the latter half of the 1950s that a permanent Trotskyist group came into existence as the consequence of ferment within the Communist Party (JCP). Dissension within the JCP centered particularly on two issues, the Hungarian Revolution and the attitude to be taken toward the All-Japan Federation of Student Autonomous Associations, better known as Zengakuren. At the time the student group was totally controlled by the Communist youth, but the JCP leadership strongly opposed the tendency of the Zengakuren to take its own positions on political issues and to demonstrate some independence of the party.

As a consequence of this controversy, although "there had never been any organized

Trotskyist groups until several small ones were formed around 1956," these joined together in a congress in January 1957, to establish the Japan Revolutionary Communist League (JRCL). It affiliated with the Paris-based (Pablo) element of the Fourth International.²

Soon after the establishment of the JRCL, they apparently got in touch with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. They sent the swp copies of a weekly which they had begun to publish, *Hangyakusha*, as well as of a Japanese translation of Trotsky's pamphlet, *Stalin's Frame-Up System and the Moscow Trials*. With these the new Japanese Trotskyist group sent an appeal, "Send us everything available written by Trotsky. There is a great hunger among the Japanese workers and students for the work of Trotsky and other great Marxists."³

Some of the Trotskyists continued to try to work within the Japan Communist Party. However, in 1958 Kyoji Nishi, one of their most important figures and a member of the Kyoto Prefectural Committee of the JCP, as well as most of the leaders of the Zengakuren, were thrown out of the Communists' ranks. As a result, at the thirteenth national congress of the student group the Japan Revolutionary Communist League won a majority in its leadership.⁴

The Trotskyists continued to be dominant in the Zengakuren during most of the rest of its existence. In 1964 an "Activity Report from Japan Zengakuren" noted that "the Communist Party which accuses Zengakuren as Trotskyist, agent of imperialism and aims at an organizational split and the destruction of Zengakuren, has often tried in vain to organize a 'federation of student autonomous associations' in place of Zengakuren." The Communists had established a student group Heimingakuren, which apparently worked within Zengakuren.⁵

In 1959 the JRCL began publishing a bulletin in English, *Struggles in Japan*. The December 21, 1959 issue of that periodical told about Trotskyist activity within the student

movement as well as their activity within the Coal Miners Union, the country's largest.⁶

During the 1960s the Japanese Trotskyists undertook an experiment in "entrism" in the Japan Socialist Party. This lasted until 1968, when under the impulse of a wide student mobilization against the Vietnam War in which the Trotskyists played some role, they broke away from the JSP and reestablished the open Japan Revolutionary Communist League.⁷

In this period there existed a dissident group, the Kakumaru faction, led by "comrade Kuroda," which had certain affinities with the Spartacist League of the United States.⁸ There is no indication that that group broke away from the JRCL.

In 1977 Jiro Kurosawa, a leader of the JRCL, described the growth of the organization after its open reappearance in the late 1960s: "We established the party and built up our apparatus in the youth radicalization, and from about 1972 to 1975 our main activity has aimed at building up our influence within the working class. That is, educating ourselves, accumulating cadres, and establishing some strongholds, or if not strongholds at least a certain influence in some places."⁹

By 1974 the JRCL had already claimed at least some influence in the trade union movement. Another JRCL leader Yohichi Sakai, who was interviewed some while later, noted that during the annual spring offensive of the unions in that year, "we did what was possible to intervene in the campaign, the best example is that of the city of Sendai. We sought to make the strikes active, mobilizing the workers through meetings, picket lines, and occupation of factories. We had success in certain unions in certain cities; but only in Sendai could we have an impact on the strike on a citywide level."¹⁰

By the early 1980s it was claimed that the Trotskyists constituted a significant element in the Leftist faction in *sohyo*, the

country's principal trade union organization.¹¹

The Trotskyists established special organizations to work among women and the youth. In 1971 they began publication of a special monthly magazine for women, *Fujin Tsushin* (*Women's Correspondence*). Then, in August 1978 a conference sponsored by the magazine met in Tokyo to establish the Socialist Women's Council. Fraternal delegates attended from the JRCL and its youth group, as well as from the Socialist Workers Party of the U.S. Greetings were received from the United Secretariat and its affiliates in Australia and New Zealand.

The Socialist Women's Council was organized in part to compete with the Communist Party-controlled National Mothers Congress. At the time of its organization, it was announced that "the council holds that the oppression of women is rooted in class society and the private property system and can be eliminated only through the overthrow of capitalism. . . . By organizing women in solidarity with struggles, particularly the women's struggles taking place all over Japan and Asia, they will be showing the way forward to the day when women have a completely equal place in society."¹²

The youth arm of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League was organized in 1974. It was the Japan Communist Youth. It was particularly active within the student movement.¹³

The Japanese Trotskyists participated in a number of campaigns. One of their longest-running efforts was in the struggle over the building of a new Tokyo airport at Narita, a project strongly opposed by the peasants of the area who were displaced to make way for the new installation. The issue was debated from the early 1960s until at least 1978, and the Trotskyists were among the most active people in agitating against the airport.

One hostile (Spartacist) observer commented on the actions of the JRCL (which he referred to as the *DYI*) in the culminating demonstrations in March 1978. He reported

seeing on local television "DYI members smashing out the windows and bashing the computers of the airport control tower. . . . Later I learned that the DYI had sacrificed the jobs of their trade union members who participated in this."¹⁴ Three years later fourteen people, including seven JRCL members, were given substantial jail sentences for their activities during that demonstration.¹⁵

The Japanese Trotskyists also organized demonstrations and other efforts to protest the military regime in South Korea. For instance, the JRCL weekly *Sakai Kakumei* (*World Revolution*) carried an article protesting against the conviction by the Korean Supreme Court of opposition leader Kim Dae Jung, who had been kidnapped from Japan by the Korean secret police.¹⁶

At the time of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime, the Japanese Trotskyists' Central Committee adopted a long resolution favoring the Vietnamese actions: "We support the Vietnamese government and the new Kampuchean government of the National Salvation Front against the Chinese government and the former Pol Pot regime."¹⁷ This line, of course, was in conformity with that of the United Secretariat.

It is not clear to what degree the Japanese Trotskyites participated in elections. However, at the time of the 1979 municipal elections *World Revolution* noted that "these militant currents, including the JRCL, were unable to intervene in the elections as a single, unified left current. They failed to advance a common struggle around clearly defined objectives."¹⁸

By 1984 the JRCL had undergone a split, with a group breaking away to form Chukaku (Revolutionary Communist League, National Committee—Core Faction). Members of this dissident group were reported to have conducted a number of physical attacks on members of the JRCL and its youth group, Japan Communist Youth, and Chukaku had announced that it intended to

"stamp out" the JRCL. The JRCL organized a statement by "358 well-known Japanese intellectuals" protesting these attacks.¹⁹ No information is available concerning the reasons for or seriousness of this split in the JRCL.

Trotskyism in Korea

Trotskyism was very late in getting established in Korea. However, by the early 1980s a group of South Korean workers who had returned from residence in Japan, where they had become Trotskyists, established a small section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.¹ We do not have any information about the name or activities of that group.

Trotskyism in Lebanon

Trotskyism has always been relatively weak in the Arab countries of the Middle East. No Trotskyist organizations were established before World War II in those nations, most of which were colonies. Subsequently, the lack of freedom to organize political parties other than those favored by the regimes in power made it difficult to establish and maintain even Stalinist Communist parties, with the very substantial backing, financial and otherwise, which they enjoyed from the Soviet Union. The Trotskyists, of course, had no such external support.

Until the outbreak of civil war in the middle 1970s Lebanon was an exception to the pattern in most of the Arab Middle East. It enjoyed a political pluralism and degree of civil liberties and democracy which was almost unique in the region. It is not surprising, therefore, that the most substantial Trotskyist party in the area has been that of Lebanon.

We have no precise information as to when the Groupe Communiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist Group—GCR) was established, although it certainly existed by the early 1970s. It was reportedly formed by people who left the Lebanese Communist Party.¹ It seems to have been able to function more or less freely until the outbreak of the civil war. It published a periodical *el-Mounadil* (*The Militant*) and was part of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.²

At the time of the Yom Kippur War between Israel and its Arab neighbors in 1973, a leader of the GCR was interviewed. He explained "the position of the GCR on the war." He commented that "in the present war no Marxist can remain neutral under the pretext that this is an interbourgeois conflict." This unnamed GCR leader added: "Unlike the opportunists of all stripes, we do not

content ourselves with expressing solidarity with the Arab armies against Israel. We advance a body of transitional demands that allow for fueling our struggle against all the established powers of the Arab region, for the Arab socialist revolution."

These "transitional demands" were "NO to the 'peaceful solution'! NO to recognition of the Zionist State! Total and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli army to the pre-1967 borders! NO to a cease-fire! NO to intervention of the great powers to settle the conflict! Prolonged war until victory! Arming and training of the masses! Total boycott of imperialism! Full democratic rights for the Arab masses! Freedom of action for the Palestinian resistance within the Arab countries and freedom to operate from them!"³

On November 20, 1973 the GCR and Israeli affiliates of the United Secretariat issued a joint statement on the Yom Kippur War. That document started by stating that "On the occasion of the fourth Arab-Israeli war, we Jewish and Arab revolutionary Marxists, adherents of the Fourth International in the Arab countries and within the Zionist state itself, are determined to express jointly our viewpoint, which is that of proletarian internationalism."

The joint statement went on to say that "revolutionary Marxists are not neutral in the war between the Zionist state and the Arab bourgeoisie. We support the struggle of the Arab peoples against the Zionist state. . . . Revolutionary Marxists' support for the war against the Zionist state in no way represents support to the policies of the Arab bourgeoisies. . . ."

The statement ended with a series of demands: "Complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli army from the territories occupied in June 1967! No to the 'peaceful solution'! No to the betrayal of the national cause of the Palestinian Arab people! For a common revolutionary struggle of Arab and Jewish workers! Against imperialism, Zionism, and the Arab bourgeoisies! Long live proletarian internationalism!"⁴

With the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon, which soon resulted in the intervention of Syrian troops in the conflict, a leader of the GCR was again interviewed. In the process of this discussion, the Lebanese Trotskyist noted: "Most left-wing organizations have been founded by Christians or at least have a high proportion of Christians. This is true of the CP, this is true of the Organization for Communist Action in Lebanon, this is true of the Trotskyist group. . . ."⁵

At the time of Anwar el-Sadat's visit to Israel in 1978 to seek peace, the Lebanese Trotskyists' Central Committee issued a statement which expressed strong opposition to Sadat's negotiations, and ended with a statement of the position which ought to be adopted by "nationalist and democratic fronts in Lebanon." The points in this "position" were: "Solidarity with the Palestinian resistance and defense of its right to total freedom of action; the demand that the Syrian troops now in Lebanon be concentrated along the southern border to confront the Zionist enemy; defense of democratic freedoms and struggle against whoever tries to repress them; total secularization, rejection of 'unity' at the expense of the masses, and the struggle to establish the election of a constituent assembly, with representatives selected on the basis of a nationwide election and of a proportional vote not based on religion."⁶

A few months later when the Israelis invaded part of southern Lebanon, a member of the Executive Committee of the GCR was interviewed. He commented that the GCR "could not just stand by as observers while Zionist troops invaded southern Lebanon. Groups of fighters belonging to our organization took part in the military effort in southern Lebanon. . . . When the invasion began the GCR, the Palestinian Liberation Front, and other Lebanese far left groups issued a common call for a mobilization against the Israeli invasion and for the unconditional withdrawal of Zionist troops. . . ."⁷

With the full-scale invasion of Lebanon by the Israelis in June 1982, the Lebanese

Trotskyists participated actively in the struggle against the invaders: "After the beginning of combat our comrades occupied a headquarters in West Beirut and mobilized on a permanent basis with the Palestinian and progressive Lebanese forces to defend the city. They published a number of their journals and organized debate meetings on the problems of the struggle in Lebanon and its international implications."⁶

On June 15, 1982, the GCR issued an "Open Letter to the Lebanese Fighting Organizations." This document started, "Comrades, brothers, at this decisive moment in the history of our national struggle when the Zionist army encircles Beirut, after thousands of the sons of the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples have fallen in the battle for liberty and true dignity, we have judged it necessary to address you with all the sincerity required by the importance of the period through which we are passing."

The Open Letter presented a seven point program:

1. Continue the struggle without restrictions against the Zionist army of occupation. . . .
2. Refuse entry of nonallied armies which would be legal treason, or of the armies of imperialist States or States agents of imperialism.
3. Refuse all formulas concocted by the USA and Saudi Arabia. . . .
4. Consider the institution of Lebanese "legality" as traitors. Establish a government of National Resistance composed of the forces which had really fought the Zionist enemy.
5. Put into execution the project of local councils. . . .
6. Unify the military forces and centralize them in a national guard. . . .
7. Demand of the anti-imperialist States and forces of the world, notably the USSR and Cuba, an immediate military intervention alongside the Lebanese-Palestinian resistance. . . .⁹

Two weeks later the Groupe Communiste Révolutionnaire issued another document, an "Appeal to the Combatants of the Com-

mon Forces and to the Resisting Masses of Our Two Peoples." This called for continued military resistance against the Israelis and denounced all negotiations.¹⁰

On August 26, 1982, the GCR issued a "Second Open Letter to the Leaders of the Fighting Lebanese Organizations." It denounced the negotiations of the leaders of the PLO for the evacuation of their troops from the Beirut area and argued that "there exists an objective class division in the ranks of what you call the 'Islamic and patriotic camp' " with "the bourgeois forces who are agents of Saudian power, which is itself an agent of imperialism" being ready to reach an agreement with the right-wing Phalangists, whom the document labels "fascists." It reiterated earlier demands for establishment of a national guard and of local councils.¹¹

In an interview published in November 1982, S. Jabor, a leader of the GCR, summarized the "lessons" of what had occurred in Lebanon in the previous months. These were: "First . . . that one cannot count on the Soviet Union as an ally of the colonial revolution. . . . The second lesson has been new confirmation that one cannot expect anything of the Arab bourgeois nationalist regimes, however radical they may be, such as Syria. . . . The third lesson is the recognition of the validity of the theory of permanent revolution. This implies first the demonstration of the tendency for all conflicts with imperialism to be internationalized, to involve all the region. And still more important, this demonstrates the incapacity of all bourgeois leaders to struggle against imperialism."¹²

When the split occurred in the PLO between Yasser Arafat and his opponents, the GCR strongly supported Arafat's enemies. At the fourth congress of the GCR in June 1983, it adopted a resolution which said that "the duty of the Arab and international revolutionary forces is, today, to support the dissident current of Fatah in the struggle to constitute a fighting organization for the

liberation of Palestine, replacing the degenerated bureaucratic organizations which have abandoned this objective to seek to obtain a parcel of territory under the sun of American imperialism and alongside the State of Israel. . . ."¹³

Early in 1984, at the time of an effort to overthrow the Lebanese government of President Amin Gemayel, it was reported that "the Revolutionary Communist Group . . . has participated in the recent struggle to bring down Amin Gemayel and to force the withdrawal of the imperialist forces. Our comrades are active in Beirut, where they have been engaged in defense actions alongside the Lebanese CP, with which the CCR works. They have also been active in the mountains to the southeast of the capital, where they have been engaged in activities of the same type along with the Lebanese left, as well as the Palestinian resistance and Druse forces."¹⁴

Lutte Ouvrière Tendency of International Trotskyism

One of the smallest factions in International Trotskyism has been that centering on the Lutte Ouvrière group in France. Although small, this tendency has had some distinctive things in its history and its political position.

The political ancestor of the present French Lutte Ouvrière was that element in French Trotskyism which felt that it was premature to form the Fourth International in 1938. They continued their separate existence outside of the International then and subsequently. They did not participate in the general unification of French Trotskyism in the last year of World War II.

Representatives of Lutte Ouvrière (then Voix Ouvrière) participated in the 1966 Third Conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International sponsored particularly by the British Healyites and the French Lambertist faction. They did not become part of the International Committee, however. Subsequently, an element within the United States Spartacist league which was sympathetic with Lutte Ouvrière broke with the Spartacists to form The Spark, as the Lutte Ouvrière counterpart in the United States.

In addition to the French and United States groups, the other elements in this tendency of International Trotskyism are Combat Ouvrier in the French Antilles and the African Union of Internationalist Communist Workers, composed of immigrant African workers in France. One thing which distinguishes all of these groups from other Trotskyist elements is their position that the Soviet Union, because of its revolutionary origins, is a degenerated workers state, but all other Communist Party-controlled regimes remain capitalist or bourgeois.¹

Trotskyism in Luxemburg

We have obtained very little information on the history of the Trotskyist movement in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. Since the 1970s there has existed an affiliate of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. That organization, the Revolutionary Communist League, held its sixth congress in December 1984 at which time it resolved to change its name to Revolutionary Socialist Party. The party also had a youth group, the Revolutionary Socialist Youth, and published a regular newspaper, *Klassenkampf*.¹

Trotskyism in Mauritius

The principal French-language publication of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International indicated early in 1984 the formation of a party of its orientation in Mauritius, the island republic in the Indian Ocean. This was the Organisation Militante des Travailleurs (OMT). It was established in January 1984 by dissidents from the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM), then the country's principal left-wing party. Led by Serge Rayapoule, a former member of the Central Committee of the MMM, its first congress declared its intention to form "a true revolutionary party," and said that "our struggle is then a struggle for socialism, that is to say, to make the island of Mauritius a democratic Republic of the working people." The congress proposed nationalization of the sugar industry (providing 75 percent of the island's exports and 25 percent of its employment), as well as of the banks and insurance companies, all of which should be placed "under the control of the workers."

The OMT also organized a kind of front group from what had been the National Anti-Unemployment Front, the FMAS. Its task was described as being that of "a school of socialism for all those who belong to it," and "to permit its members to have an apprenticeship in political struggle, and an apprenticeship in true workers democracy."¹

Trotskyism in Mexico

It was in Mexico that Leon Trotsky died in August 1940, the victim of an assassin's blow. He had received refuge there early in 1937 in large part due to the efforts of his Mexican followers, who had developed an organization about four years before his arrival.

Mexican Trotskyism long survived the death of the man who had inspired it. By the 1980s, although split into several competing groups, it constituted one of the most significant branches of International Trotskyism, and one of the few which had actually succeeded in electing members of the national parliament.

Beginnings of Mexican Trotskyism

The man who was principally responsible for establishing the first Trotskyist organization in Mexico was a U.S. Communist, Russell Blackwell, who used the name Rosario Negrete in Mexico. He had first gone to Mexico to organize a Communist children's organization, Pioneers. He sided with Trotsky in the Stalin-Trotsky struggle, and with the establishment of the Communist League of America began to receive its periodical, *The Militant*. He began to seek converts, and one of the first was Manuel Rodríguez, who was then active in several Communist Party front organizations and was on close personal terms with members of the party's Central Committee.

By early 1933 Blackwell had gathered a sufficient group to establish the Oposición Comunista de Izquierda (Communist Left Opposition—OCI). Within about a year they were joined by two other young teachers,

Luciano Galicia and Octavio Fernández, both of whom had joined the Communist Party after being active in Communist front organizations. They withdrew from the party in March 1934 and joined the OCI.

Later in that year the OCI changed its name to Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI) and began to publish a periodical, *Nueva Internacional*, which, among other things, carried a number of articles by Trotsky. A fund-raising campaign for the magazine brought contributions from the famous painter Diego Rivera, the musician Carlos Chávez, and the novelist José Revueltas.

In the middle of 1934 the LCI held a conference at which it elected an executive committee, approved statutes and drew up several theses. Soon afterwards it established its own front organization, the Asociación de Estudios y Divulgación Marxista-Leninista (Association for Marxist-Leninist Studies and Propaganda) of which Diego Rivera became secretary general. This group organized a number of public meetings on literary, cultural, and political subjects.

The Liga Comunista Internacionalista was not yet a year old when it suffered its first split. There were both personal and tactical problems involved. One issue was that of entrism, with a group around Manuel Rodríguez urging that the Mexican Trotskyists apply the tactic Trotsky had recommended several years before to his French followers and enter the Partido Socialista de Izquierda, a loosely organized party which had been set up during the 1934 election campaign to support the presidential aspirations of Colonel Adelberto Tejeda, the left-wing governor of the State of Veracruz.

Another issue was that of cooperation with Vincente Lombardo Toledano, then head of the Confederación General de Obreros y Campesinos de México and a strong opponent of the Stalinists in the labor movement. Lombardo had attended a number of meetings of the LCI and had suggested that they work closely with him in organized labor, a policy which Rodríguez fa-

Material in this entry dealing with the period before 1969 is adapted from Robert J. Alexander, *Trotskyism in Latin America*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1973.

vored but Luciano Galicia and Octavio Fernández opposed.

As a consequence of these disputes the Liga Comunista Internacionalista broke into three groups. One was headed by Manuel Rodríguez, another by Galicia and Fernández, and the third by S. De Anda. There were extensive polemics among them, each denying that the others were truly Trotskyist.

It was not until the middle of 1936 that a semblance of unity was reestablished among the Mexican Trotskyists. Although Rodríguez dropped out of political activity and S. De Anda continued to maintain a small group of his own which entered into contact with the Spanish Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM), the Liga Comunista Internacionalista was reestablished with a Political Bureau composed of Luciano Galicia, Octavio Fernández, Félix Ibarra (formerly associated with Rodríguez), and Diego Rivera.

This was the first time that Diego Rivera had formally become a member of Mexican Trotskyism, let alone part of its ruling body. Although Rivera had been expelled from the Communist Party in September 1928, it was several years after that before he announced his sympathy for and alignment with Trotskyism. Even then, although they appreciated his financial backing and sought to exploit his moral support, both the Mexican Trotskyists and the Americans with whom they were in more or less close contact had doubts about having Rivera as a leader or even a full-fledged member of the organization. His personal idiosyncracies were many, and there was doubt about the "seriousness" of his commitment to Trotskyism.

The new LCI began issuing a newspaper, *IV Internacional*, the first issue of which appeared in September 1936, the last in December 1937. They also began to develop at least a modest presence in the organized labor movement, succeeding in organizing a new Sindicato Único de la Construcción among building trades workers and estab-

lishing relations with a bakers' union, the Casa del Pueblo, in the headquarters of which were offices of several other small unions.

Soon after the reestablishment of the LCI it received an urgent request for help in seeking asylum in Mexico for Leon Trotsky himself. Sometime earlier, at the request of the International Secretariat of the Left Opposition, Manuel Rodríguez had ascertained from General Francisco Mújica (for whom Rodríguez was working at the time) that if the occasion arose, the government of President Lázaro Cárdenas would be willing to consider the idea of granting asylum to Trotsky. Mújica was one of the most influential members of the Cárdenas cabinet.

When Diego Rivera received a cable in November 1936 from New York urging that Cárdenas be immediately approached on the asylum issue, the Political Bureau of the LCI decided to send Rivera and Octavio Fernández to Torreón, in northern Mexico, where President Cárdenas then was. Armed with a letter from General Mújica introducing them and expressing his support for asylum, they waited upon Cárdenas. The president immediately informed them that he would grant Trotsky asylum on the condition that his Mexican followers not organize his reception in such a way as to foment a counter-demonstration in Mexico.

After several weeks' delay in getting formal arrangements from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the acceptance of Trotsky's presence in Mexico, such arrangements were agreed to on December 17, 1936. Trotsky arrived in Mexico a few weeks later.

The condition for allowing Trotsky to take up residence in Mexico was that he not intervene in Mexican internal politics. As a consequence, Trotsky maintained only the most formal relations, in a political sense, with the Mexican Trotskyists. What intervention in their affairs took place was carried out through the Socialist Workers Party of the United States rather than directly by Trotsky.

However, one of the major elements in the relationship between Trotsky and his Mexican supporters was their provision of guards for Trotsky's home, which was for almost a year the responsibility of Octavio Fernández. After a further split in the LCI at the end of 1937 U.S. and German Trotskyists were brought in to augment the Mexican contingent. At least some of the Mexicans involved later felt that if Mexican guards had been on duty when Ramón Mercader came to kill Trotsky, the assassin would not have been admitted without first being thoroughly searched, in which case the hatchet he used as a murder weapon would have been discovered.

In December 1937 there was a new split in the Liga Comunista Internacionalista. This time the contending leaders were Luciano Galicia and Octavio Fernández. Both personal rivalries and a growing propensity for Galicia to call for the use of violence (for which he was privately reprimanded at least twice by Trotsky himself) figured in this split.

At Trotsky's request the Socialist Workers Party sent in James Cannon, Max Shachtman, and Vincent R. Dunne to try to bring peace among the Mexican Trotskyists. When they were unsuccessful it was decided to send in Charles Curtiss, a Los Angeles leader of the SWP, to stay as long as was necessary to reunite the Mexicans.

By the time of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in September 1938, unity had not yet been restored in the Mexican section. Although Pierre Naville listed the Liga Comunista Internacionalista as the International's Mexican section,¹ and credited it with having fifteen members,² in fact no duly constituted section existed at that moment.

The Founding Conference of the Fourth International adopted a special resolution "On the Mexican Question." It strongly scolded Luciano Galicia and Octavio Fernández, accusing them of having adopted a "third period policy in the trade union field"

and of issuing "irresponsible and adventurist slogans" in the campaign against the high cost of living. It also accused Galicia of attacking the Cárdenas regime "in a way that was one-sided, sectarian, and in the given circumstances, objectively reactionary."

This resolution authorized Curtiss to continue his efforts to reunite the Mexican section and provided that in the reorganized group Galicia and Fernández should only be admitted on the condition that neither would hold a "leading post" for a year. Finally, the motion stipulated that Diego Rivera should not be a member of the reconstituted section but instead that "his work and activity for the Fourth International shall remain under the direct control of the International Subsecretariat."³ A few months later, Rivera broke with the Trotskyists in order to support the opposition candidate in the 1940 presidential election.

The Liga Comunista Internacionalista was reestablished as a section of the Fourth International early in 1939. It began publication of a periodical, *El Bolchevique*, which carried considerable news on the Fourth International as well as information on current Mexican politics and trade union activity.

In September 1939 the LCI changed its name to Partido Obrero Internacionalista, Sección Mexicana de la Cuarta Internacional (POI). It also changed the name of its periodical to *Lucha Obrera*.

Until the death of Trotsky much of the POI's effort was spent on providing security protection for Trotsky and on editing and distributing a monthly periodical, *Clave*. This had been started with the help of Charles Curtiss and was designed particularly to be a vehicle for the publication in Spanish of articles by Leon Trotsky. Octavio Fernández was manager of the periodical, fifteen issues of which appeared before Trotsky's death.

In addition to the POI, a second organization professing loyalty to Trotskyism ex-

isted during the period before Trotsky's murder. This was the group headed by Luciano Galicia, which continued to use the name Liga Comunista Internacionalista.

Mexican Trotskyism After Trotsky's Death

Although at the beginning of the 1940s Mexican Trotskyism was reunited and obtained more influence, particularly in organized labor, than it had in the previous decade, renewed factionalism helped to bring about the virtual disappearance of the movement shortly afterwards. It was not until the 1960s that organized Trotskyism appeared again in Mexico, largely as a consequence of the student and general youth revolt of that period.

Late in 1940 Luciano Galicia, who for two years had been outside the Fourth International, joined the Partido Obrero Internacionalista, of which he became a major leader. The POI remained united for about five years. During that period the Trotskyists developed some influence in those factions of the labor movement which were in competition with the majority central labor organization, the Confederación de Trabajadores de México (CTM). The CTM had been headed by Vicente Lombardo Toledano and the Stalinists still had a major role in it.

The Trotskyists backed establishment of the Confederación Proletaria Nacional (CPN) by dissident elements of the ex-anarchosyndicalist Confederación General de Trabajadores and of the country's first national central group, the Confederación Regional de Obreras Mexicanas. Subsequently, the representatives of the construction and mosaic workers unions in the executive of the CPN were members of the Partido Obrero Internacionalista.

The POI members were also active in the establishment of the Federación Libertaria de Obreros y Campesinos, the Federal District affiliate of the Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT). At least one Trotsky-

ist was a member of the National Council of the CNT. The Federación Libertaria asked Octavio Fernández to organize and conduct a Marxist study group which was attended by about forty workers.

Some efforts were also made by the Trotskyists to gain influence in the CTM. The POI paper *Lucha Obrera* publicized the struggle of some leaders against the influence of Lombardo Toledano and the Stalinists within the organization.

During this period the Trotskyists strongly opposed both the governments of the ruling Partido de la Revolución Mexicana and its major opponents. In the elections of 1940 and 1946 it denounced both the government's nominees and those of the opposition.

In spite of the modest expansion of Trotskyist influence in the labor movement a new split in the ranks of the POI took place late in 1945 which soon destroyed not only that influence but the Mexican Trotskyist movement itself. Once again, the principal leaders of the competing factions were Luciano Galicia and Octavio Fernández.

One subject of controversy was the party's trade union policy. Galicia favored concentration on trying to penetrate the CTM, while Fernández supported continuation of attempts to gain influence in the anti-CTM factions of the labor movement. There were undoubtedly personal issues also involved in this controversy.

Galicia continued to have a majority in the leadership of the POI. As a consequence, Fernández and his supporters withdrew from the party in October 1945 and established the Grupo Socialista Obrero (GSO) which began to publish *Tribuna Socialista*.

Both the POI and the GSO sought to obtain the endorsement of the Fourth International, and particularly of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. For a while at least the FI and SWP sought to mediate between them. However, the GSO began to question fundamental positions of the Trotskyist movement, particularly the

definition of the Soviet Union and other Communist Party-controlled regimes as "workers states." By 1947 the Fourth International had completely repudiated the Grupo Socialista Obrero. Soon thereafter the GSO went out of existence. The Partido Obrero Internacionalista also ceased to exist at about the same time.

During the 1950s there was no recognized Trotskyist organization in Mexico, although several former leaders of the Mexican Trotskyists cooperated with people from the Socialist Workers Party of the United States in publishing a periodical, *¿Que Hacer!* These Mexicans included Rafael Galván, a leading figure in one of the country's electrical workers unions who used the pseudonym Martin Arriaga in his Trotskyist activities; and Félix Ibarra, a leader of the telephone workers union. Another ex-member of Mexican Trotskyism, Fausto Dávila Solis, was elected mayor of the oil town of Poza Rica in 1956 on an independent ticket, but his election was not recognized by the government.

At the end of the 1950s the foundation was laid for a new Trotskyist group within the Juventud Socialista, an independent student group which split in 1959 with the majority forming the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), which was accepted as the Mexican section of the Pabloite International Secretariat at its Sixth Congress in 1961. When J. Posadas led the Latin American Bureau of the Pabloite forces to launch its own version of the Fourth International, the POR(T) became part of that group.

The POR(T) continued to be principally a student group, but it had a few people of the older generation associated with it, including Fausto Dávila Solis, and a Sr. Galván (not to be confused with Rafael Galván) who had also been active in the Trotskyist movement in the 1940s.

The Mexican Posadas Trotskyist party gained temporary notoriety in the mid-1960s because of its association with one of the guerrilla groups then active in Guate-

mala. That guerrilla faction was led by ex-Lt. Marco Antonio Yon Sosa and was known as MR-13.

The intermediary between the Yon Sosa group and the Mexican POR(T) was Francisco Amado, a Guatemalan businessman who after 1962 had been the agent of Fidel Castro in trying to involve the Guatemalan Communists in guerrilla activity. When Amado broke with Castro he turned to the Mexican Posadas Trotskyists, some of whom he had known as fellow students at the Social Science School in Mexico City.

Amado began publishing a periodical in Guatemala, *Revolución Socialista*, which propagated Posadas Trotskyist ideas. At about the same time the Mexican POR(T) leader Galván became the principal agent of Yon Sosa in smuggling arms to the Guatemalan guerrillas. Early in 1966 Amado was captured and killed by Guatemalan military forces. Galván was arrested at about the same time and was deported to Mexico.

In the meanwhile Castro, who had broken off all contact with Yon Sosa, had used the platform of the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in January 1966 to denounce the activities of Posadas's Mexican followers and the Trotskyist movement in general. Three months later Yon Sosa himself expelled all Trotskyists from his organization, charging them with diverting funds which had been raised to support his guerrilla movement to Posadas's Fourth International.

In Mexico, the POR(T) held a national conference and leadership training school in July 1967 which were reported to have lasted nine days. A new Central Committee and Political Bureau were elected at that time. The party was devoting much of its energy to propagating the somewhat idiosyncratic ideas of J. Posadas and received considerable financing from the Posadas Fourth International.

The POR(T) played a significant role in the 1968 student strike which was violently suppressed by the government of President

Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. A number of the POR(T) leaders and members were jailed and the Posadas version of the Fourth International thereafter carried on an extensive international campaign on behalf of their release.

Meanwhile a rival Trotskyist group had appeared in Mexico. The minority of the Juventud Socialista in the 1959 split had formed a group which it originally called Liga Estudiantil Marxista but then renamed Liga Obrera Marxista (LOM). It became associated with the anti-Pablo faction of International Trotskyism.

The LOM was represented at the 1963 congress which established the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. There it was recognized as a "sympathizing member" of USEC. It was reported to have had only about twenty members at that time. At the 1965 congress of USEC, LOM was accepted as a "section."⁴

The LOM succeeded in gaining some working-class members. In 1964-1965 there developed a conflict between those workers and the students who had originally organized the group. At the Eighth Congress of the United Secretariat in 1965, at which LOM was accepted as the Mexican section of USEC, an attempt was made to smooth over this conflict. In the end the worker element broke away from LOM. LOM students played a significant role in the student strike of 1968.

Soon after the 1968 strike a number of students of Trotskyist orientation established the Grupo Comunista Internacionalista (GCI), which was aligned with the United Secretariat. The GCI published two periodicals, a *Boletín Interno*, principally for its own members, and *La Internacional*, for broader distribution.

The GCI began to work closely with the United Secretariat, and particularly with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, in bringing out publications which were designed for distribution generally to the Spanish-speaking part of the world. These included a Spanish version of the general

periodical of USEC, *Cuarta Internacional*, and a more topical news organ, *Perspectiva Mundial*.

The Mexican POR(T)

Thus at the beginning of the 1970s, two currents of International Trotskyism were represented in Mexico. One was the Posadas faction, the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista); the other the Grupo Comunista Internacionalista (GCI), associated with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The POR(T), although it had gained more notoriety in the 1960s because of its short involvement with a guerrilla movement in neighboring Guatemala, remained quite small. However, this did not prevent it from feeling the crackdown on the far left which followed the student uprising in Mexico City in 1968. Several months later long jail terms were handed to a number of far leftists, and it was reported that "the most harsh jail sentences" were imposed on "workers and sympathizers of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario." A particular victim was Adolfo Gilly, an Argentine who had been active for some time in the POR(T).⁵

The POR(T) was in existence as late as 1977. Soon thereafter, it seems to have disappeared.⁶

The Struggles Within the GCI

The Grupo Comunista Internacionalista came into existence during the student movement of 1968 and for long it remained an organization which had its principal strength in the universities, particularly those of Mexico City. Among those of an older generation who became associated to some degree with the GCI was José Revueltas, one of the country's best-known novelists. He had been associated with the Trotskyists in the 1930s but subsequently had rejoined the Communist Party (PCM). He was expelled from the PCM once again in

1960 with a group who established the Liga Leninista Espartaco (LLE), but then in 1963 was also expelled from the LLE. In September 1968 he founded the Movimiento Comunista Internacionalista, and it was out of that group that there emerged a few months later the Grupo Comunista Internacionalista.⁷

Revueltas sent a greeting to the 1969 Congress of the United Secretariat. That message indicated that he agreed with the then current USEC analysis of the state of world affairs: "The New Revolution will have a dual character. It will be both anticapitalist and antidogmatic and will embrace at once the countries still dominated by the bourgeoisie, the socialist countries, and the countries of the so-called Third World."⁸

José Revueltas did not stay for long in the GCI. As the organ of the GCI's successor wrote more than a decade later, "The period of closeness and coincidence between the forces which would found the Mexican Section of the Fourth International did not last long. After Revueltas left jail, the differences about the Leninist conception of the party—on which Revueltas inclined more for a spontaneist conception—required that the efforts at party construction not continue on a common basis."⁹

The GCI held a national plenum in May 1971. The fact that discussions at that meeting centered largely on problems in the student movement indicated that the social base of the organization was still principally in the universities.¹⁰ The prestige of Trotskyism was undoubtedly raised in early 1972 when the Belgian Trotskyist leader Ernest Mandel gave a week-long series of lectures at the Mexican National Autonomous University in Mexico City. The GCI newspaper *La Internacional* announced that it would publish Mandel's lectures as a pamphlet.¹¹

The struggle which began in 1969 between most of the European leadership of USEC on the one hand, and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States and its allies—including particularly Nahuel Moreno's Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores

(PST) of Argentina—on the other, had a negative impact on the Mexican Grupo Comunista Internacionalista. The leadership of the GCI sided principally with the Europeans, and as a consequence in October 1972 twenty-four members of the GCI withdrew to form a rival organization, the Juventud Marxista Revolucionaria (JMR), which was aligned with the SWP and the PST.

In June 1973 the JMR sought reunification, but the GCI leaders refused. As a consequence, the JMR remained a separate group, holding its first congress in December 1973 and at that time changing its name to Liga Socialista.

At a national congress of the Grupo Comunista Internacionalista in 1975 a group came to the leadership which favored reunification with the Liga Socialista. However, the decision in favor of reunification led to a further split in the GCI, with a group withdrawing to form still another organization around a new newspaper, *Rojo*. Thus, by 1976 there existed three different groups in Mexico which were in one way or another associated with the United Secretariat.¹² Both the GCI and the Liga Socialists, which published *Bandera Roja* and *El Socialista*, respectively, were formally recognized as competitive groups of USEC.¹³

In 1975 the continuing struggle within USEC brought still another split among its Mexican supporters, this time within the Liga Socialista. There, as the dissidence between Nahuel Moreno and his associates and the SWP of the United States led Moreno early in 1976 to take the lead in establishing the Bolshevik Tendency within USEC, the supporters of these two camps within the Mexican Liga Socialista parted company.

By the time this new split took place the Liga Socialista was said to have 225 members. The division, in which several members of the Argentine PST played a considerable role, began at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Liga in September 1975, where the difference between those aligned with Moreno and the PST and those aligned

with the SWP first became evident. The Morenoists seized control of the party at that meeting, purging the Political Committee of its opponents. Both elements soon set up formal factions, the *Tendencia Militante* of the Morenoists and the *Tendencia Bolchevique-Leninista* of those aligned with the SWP.

The Liga Socialista convention took place in December 1970. The pro-Moreno majority decreed a purge of the party and selected a new party leadership from its own ranks. It also pushed through a resolution to break off all relations with the SWP of the United States. As a consequence of all this, the *Tendencia Bolchevique-Leninista* proclaimed itself a "public faction" of the Liga, in effect a separate organization. Both groups continued at least for some time to publish their own versions of the League's paper *El Socialista*.¹⁴

Shortly after the split in the Liga Socialista, the *Tendencia Militante* faction formed an alliance for the 1976 general elections which were then under way with the Communist Party and a small ally of the Communists, the *Movimiento de Organización Socialista*. The three groups drew up a joint electoral manifesto, endorsed the presidential candidacy of Communist Party leader Valentín Campa, and ran a joint list of candidates for senators and deputies.¹⁵ This alliance brought a strong attack from the *Tendencia Bolchevique-Leninista* of the Liga Socialista.¹⁶

In preparation for these same elections of 1976 the Central Committee of the GCI had also sought allies for the contest. In May 1975 it announced that it would "issue two calls, one to organizations of the revolutionary left to stimulate the constitution of a front of the revolutionary left which will permit us to set forth the position of the Marxists with respect to the elections and to organize participation in said elections." The other was directed to all the organizations of the left to establish a national front based on an anticapitalist program.¹⁷ In the end, the GCI also endorsed Campa's candi-

dacy and was able to establish the Front of the Revolutionary Left, together with a small group of regional organizations, to campaign on his behalf.¹⁸

The Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores

Meanwhile movement toward at least some reunification of the Mexican Trotskyist movement was under way. In 1975 the Grupo Comunista Internacionalista reunited with the Rojo faction to establish the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI). A few months after the split in the Liga Socialista the Morenoist faction of that group joined with the LCI to give birth to the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT). A year later a part of the Liga Obrera Marxista (LOM), the group aligned with the Lambertist Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI), broke away and joined the PRT.¹⁹

However, a split developed in the PRT in 1979. The followers of Nahuel Moreno, who had originally joined in establishing the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, broke away in that year to again form their own group, under the name Partido Obrero Socialista.²⁰

Nevertheless, the PRT made modest progress. According to a PRT source, "The PRT was converted quickly into a pole of attraction of sectors and individuals of the revolutionary left. In approximately twelve months, it grew about 900 percent. . . . From the student field, the militants of the PRT moved out to participate in important sections of workers, such as the telephone, electrical, nuclear workers, medical employees and workers in education, state employment, and peasants."²¹

The Mexican USCP Trotskyists engaged in a variety of different activities. The PRT participated extensively in a conference organized to celebrate in November 1979 the 100th anniversary of Trotsky's birth. Among the speakers at this meeting were

Tamara Deutscher, who had collaborated with her husband on the major biography of Trotsky; Michel Pablo; Raymond Molinier, one of the founders of French Trotskyism; Jean van Heijenoort, one-time secretary of Trotsky; Pierre Broué; and Trotsky's grandson, Vsevolod Volkof. The PRT was represented by two speakers, Cristina Rivas and Carlos Martínez de la Torre.²²

At the time of the establishment of martial law in Poland and the outlawing of Solidarity by the government of General Wojciech Jaruzelski, the PRT issued a strong condemnation of the action. It also called for mass attendance at a protest rally in the center of Mexico City.²³

As a result of modest changes in the electoral law sponsored in 1977 by the administration of President José López Portillo, the Mexican Trotskyists were able for the first time in the early 1980s to seek registration as legally recognized parties. In the case of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, it began the campaign to gather signatures for legal registration of the party as early as November 1977, with almost 400 people participating in the campaign.²⁴

This first effort was only partly successful. Although the party gathered the required 65,000 signatures, the Federal Electoral Commission granted the PRT only recognition in 1978 as a "political association," and ruled that its full recognition as a political party would depend on whether it carried out continuing activity for a year. Finally, on June 11, 1981, the Federal Electoral Commission granted the PRT "provisional registration" as a political party. Its becoming a fully legalized party would depend upon its ability in the 1982 presidential election to get at least 1.5 percent of the total vote.²⁵

The PRT named as its presidential candidate Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, a leader of the National Front Against Repression and organizer of a group seeking information about people who had been picked up by the police and "disappeared." She was a political inde-

pendent. It was reported at the beginning of the campaign that "among the central themes of the election campaign are working-class political independence, internationalism, and unity in action."²⁶

As a legally recognized party the PRT was entitled to present a fifteen-minute television program every month. The first such program was censored by the Ministry of Interior, a five-minute segment being cut from it. When this created a public scandal the Ministry "promised never to do it again."²⁷

The PRT campaign was supported by some elements which did not belong to the party. In addition to left-wing independents attracted by the candidacy of Rosario Ibarra, these included the small People's Revolutionary Movement, Communist Proletariat Organization, and Union of Revolutionary Struggle.²⁸

The PRT also nominated more than four hundred candidates for the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. In its final rally of the campaign, in Mexico City, it was reported that "some 50,000 Mexican toilers, young and old marched through the heart of this city."²⁹

When the votes in the July 1982 election were counted the Federal Electoral Commission reported that the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores had obtained 416,000 votes, enough to assure the permanent registration of the party. However, at the same time, it claimed that the party's nominees for the Chamber of Deputies had gotten only 308,000 votes, or 1.45 percent of the total, and thus just short of the 1.5 percent required to place members in the Chamber. If the officially counted vote had been over the 1.5 percent level the party would have been entitled to eight members in the Chamber.³⁰ All efforts to get the Commission to change its mind failed, but even leaders of other Mexican far left parties maintained that the PRT had been deprived of deputies through electoral fraud.³¹

After the 1982 election the PRT continued

to carry on a wide range of activities. When, in September 1982, López Portillo nationalized all Mexican-owned banks in the country, the PRT's fortnightly paper *Bandera Socialista* published a statement which claimed that "economically and politically, the nationalization of the banks is as important as the nationalization of petroleum and the agrarian reform of Lázaro Cárdenas."³²

At the end of 1982 the PRT began publication of a review, *La Batalla*, in addition to its regular newspaper. It carried on its masthead the slogan "For the convergence of revolutionaries."³³ The party also published for some time *La Internacional*, described as the "Theoretical Review of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores."³⁴

Building on its having run a woman for president, the PRT subsequently sought to create a feminist organization. It was reported in mid-1983 that "the PRT thinks that it is today possible to take the first steps toward establishing committees for the construction of a national organization of women. This organization will have the objective of contributing to the general development of the women's movement, while expressing the influence of the PRT in its midst."³⁵

In mid-1983 the new president, Miguel de la Madrid, carried out a series of interviews with leaders of recognized parties, including the PRT. Later, it was reported that they had discussed the government's economic policy, "especially the agreements signed with the International Monetary Fund, Mexico's foreign policy, especially toward Central America, the question of civil and political liberties, which was specifically raised by the PRT."³⁶

During the United States primary campaign of 1984, when Jesse Jackson had a "March of Friendship" from San Ysidro, California, to Tijuana, Mexico, one of those who marched with him was Rosario Ibarra. Manuel Aguilar Mora, a leader of the PRT, was one of five Mexicans who met with Jackson in San Diego, California, after this march.³⁷ Expressions of PRT support for the

Jackson candidacy brought the PRT reprimand by the United Secretariat and conflict with the SWP of the United States.³⁸

At the time of the mid-term congressional elections of 1985 the PRT urged that united tickets be put up by it, the independent left-wing Partido Mexicano de Trabajadores, and the Partido Socialista Unificado de México, the new party organized by the Stalinists some years before. However, when the other parties did not accept this idea, the PRT ran its own slates in those elections.³⁹

One distinguishing characteristic of the PRT (aside from its affiliation with USEC) was its characterization of the Mexican regime of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional as "Bonapartist," a position it inherited from the GCI. A document of the GCI in 1975 had proclaimed that "to carry out the task of construction of capitalism in conditions of a powerful, although spontaneous, movement of the masses, the State had to control the movement of the workers, not only through repression but with more subtle means, organizing the masses and incorporating them in the state apparatus. . . . Thus there arose . . . the Bonapartist system sui generis. . . ."⁴⁰

The Partido Obrero Socialista

When the followers of Nahuel Moreno, including about 25 percent of the Central Committee, were expelled from the PRT in 1979, they first formed the Committee for the Construction of a Labor and Socialist Party. After several months devoted to preparing documents and raising funds, this committee organized the founding congress of the Partido Obrero Socialista, held on February 9-10, 1980.⁴¹

The Partido Obrero Socialista (pos) had not been in existence long enough to seek legal recognition as a political party for the elections of 1982. However, in those elections it joined the forces around the Partido Socialista Unificado Mexicano, the organization which had resulted from a merger of the Communist Party and several smaller

groups, which did have legal recognition, since this had been granted to the Communist Party in 1978. Other smaller groups in this 1982 electoral coalition were the Corriente Socialista and Unidad de Izquierda Comunista. The POS was given several spots on the list of the candidates of the PSUM.

A Morenoist source wrote after the campaign that "in this coalition, our party fought for and carried out a workers and peasants campaign in defense of the poor, in support of the Salvadorean and Central American Revolution, in support of the Polish workers against the Stalinist bureaucracy in that country, in solidarity with Argentina against Imperialist aggression, and in support of undocumented workers in the United States. . . . Unfortunately, the political orientation was not carried out by the other parties of the PSUM coalition, which . . . only raised general and national questions and forgot entirely about proletarian internationalism."⁴²

Two members of the POS were elected to the Chamber of Deputies on the PSUM ticket. These were René Rojas Ayala as a full member and Tonatiuh Mercado Vargas as an alternate member. Shortly after taking office they broke with the rest of those elected by the PSUM to form the Revolutionary Left Fraction in Congress. The party also elected Candido Vargas Torres to the legislature of the State of México.⁴³

When asked the reason for the POS deputies' break with the PSUM bloc in the Chamber, Tonatiuh Mercado explained: "After the elections . . . the PSUM and other parties decided that the solution to the Mexican crisis lay in a 'Democratic Convergence.' This would mean an alliance between the left, the governing PRI, the union bureaucracy and sectors of the bourgeois opposition. . . . The POS believes that the left and the working class have to unite to fight against bosses, land owners, the government, and the PRI. Proposing an alliance with our adversaries is a betrayal. That's why the Trotskyists in Congress broke with the left block."⁴⁴

The POS took an active part in the leadership of movements and demonstrations against the "austerity" policies which both the López Portillo and de la Madrid governments imposed on the country at the behest of the International Monetary Fund. They were active in the National Front in Defense of Wages and Against the Austerity Plan, and in the National Workers, Peasants, and People's Assembly, which were organized for that purpose, and strongly supported the "nationwide day of protest" on October 18, 1983.⁴⁵

Late in 1982 the POS proposed to the PRT and the Liga Obrera Marxista (LOM) the formation of a Trotskyist United Front, particularly to work within the organizations carrying on the fight against the austerity program. They also suggested an interchange of articles in the periodicals of the three groups to explore their agreements and disagreements on various issues, looking to the possibility of eventual unification. Neither of these suggestions apparently met with a favorable response from the other two groups, which attacked the "monolithism" and "sectarianism" of the POS.⁴⁶

In 1982 a number of expulsions from the POS resulted in the formation of another Liga Socialista. Late in 1983 that Liga Socialista decided to merge with the PRT.⁴⁷

In April 1986 the Partido Obrero Socialista merged with a group in Mexico City with which it had been collaborating for several years, an organization known by its initials as NAUCOPAC, and described as "grouping some 10,000 residents of industrial working-class areas of Mexico City." The new party was known as the Partido de los Trabajadores Zapatistas (Zapatista Workers Party) and published a periodical *El Socialista—La Hormiga Socialista*.⁴⁸

The Liga Obrera Marxista (LOM)

The Liga Obrera Marxista, like the Grupo Comunista Internacionalista, arose largely out of the student movement of 1968. Although a handful of people had kept alive a

faction of the earlier LOM after the split of the middle 1960s, it was not until the student upheaval of 1968 that the activity of its members in that movement began to provide it with a somewhat larger membership and influence.

However, whereas the LOM in the early 1960s had been affiliated with the United Secretariat, by 1971 it was associated with the International Committee of the Fourth International, that is, the Healy-Lambert faction of International Trotskyism. When that tendency broke up in 1971-72 the LOM became part of the Lambert tendency, the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI).⁴⁹

When the López Portillo government changed the law governing political parties, the LOM sought registration as a legally recognized party. However, according to a Morenoist source, "The economic crisis . . . continued and the government put an end to the process of electoral recognition of left political parties. As a result, organizations such as the Marxist Workers League (LOM), which had fulfilled the government's legal requirements . . . [were] arbitrarily denied recognition by the government."⁵⁰

Thus, the LOM was not able to present its own candidates in the 1982 elections. Nor, apparently, did it obtain a position for its members on the lists of other legally recognized parties. It urged its members and supporters to vote either for the lists of the PSUM or for those of the PRT, showing no preference for either party over the other in the contest.⁵¹

By the early 1980s the United Secretariat of the Fourth International claimed to have an affiliate in Morocco.¹ However, the political conditions in that country made it hard if not impossible for the group to function even semilegally in the 1970s and early 1980s. Publications of USEC, although keeping track of economic and political developments in the country, printed virtually nothing about the Moroccan Trotskyist movement.

Trotskyism in the Netherlands

The history of Trotskyism in the Netherlands divides clearly into two parts, before and after World War II. During most of the first period the Dutch Trotskyist movement was one of the largest and most important anywhere in the world. It was led by an early leader of the Comintern and was one of the few Trotskyist groups that controlled an important segment of the labor movement and had representatives in the country's legislative bodies. In contrast, after the war the Trotskyists were a minor factor even in the far left of Dutch politics.

The Origins of Dutch Trotskyism

The Early Career of Hendrik Sneevliet

When in 1929 Trotsky began his work of trying to build an international movement, there were few if any avowedly Trotskyist individuals or groups in the Netherlands. However, there was an important dissident Communist group, led by Hendrik (Henrious) Sneevliet, which was first rejected by Trotsky but later became for some years the Dutch affiliate of International Trotskyism.

Hendrik Sneevliet had been born in 1883, and before he was twenty years of age had joined both the railroad workers union and the Social Democratic Party. In 1913 he moved to Java in the Netherlands East Indies, where he took the lead in establishing the Social Democratic Union. After he was expelled from the East Indies by the Dutch authorities, his associates there converted the Social Democratic Union into the Indonesian Communist Party in 1920.

Under the name of Maring, Sneevliet represented the Indonesian Communists at the

Second Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in 1920, and was elected there to the Executive Committee of the Comintern. In the following year he was sent by the Comintern to China, where he attended the founding congress of the Chinese Communist Party in July 1921 and met subsequently with Sun Yat-sen. After two years in China Sneevliet returned to the Soviet Union and was sent by the Comintern to Vladivostok. In mid-1923 he returned for a short visit to China.

By the middle of 1924 Sneevliet finally returned to the Netherlands, where he became one of the major leaders of the Communist Party and head of a trade union organization controlled by the party, the NAS. However, as a result of his support of the Left Opposition in the internal struggle within the Soviet Union Sneevliet withdrew from the Communist Party in 1927. In 1929 he set up the Revolutionary Socialist Party.¹

Evolution of Trotsky-Sneevliet Relations

Between 1929 and 1933 relations between Trotsky on the one hand and Sneevliet and his party on the other were not particularly friendly. The issue which kept them apart was the insistence of Sneevliet and the Revolutionary Socialist Party that there was no hope of "reforming" the Comintern and its constituent parties, and that it was necessary to establish rival Communist parties and a new International. Until mid-1933 Trotsky and his followers were insisting that they were an "opposition" faction of the Communist International.²

Trotsky's early attitude toward Sneevliet and his followers was reflected in a letter which he sent to the Executive Committee of the Communist League of France in June 1930 protesting against an announcement in *La Verité* that an article by Sneevliet would soon be published: "One should have thought that it wasn't even necessary to raise the question of collaboration with

Sneevliet among us. We do not break with the Communist centrists in order to enter into collaboration with the confusionists of the Two-and-a-Half International."³

The editors of the English-language collection of Trotsky's writings have observed that they "are unable to explain why Trotsky in 1930 called him 'one of the leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International.' The latter was dissolved in 1923 and Sneevliet never belonged to it. Perhaps Trotsky used the term because Sneevliet's policies in 1930 reminded him of those held by the centrists of the Two-and-a-Half International."⁴ Sneevliet's insistence on the need for the establishment of parties outside of the Comintern might well have brought to Trotsky's mind, at that point, the group of parties outside of either the Socialist or Communist Internationals which in the early 1920s made up the so-called Second-and-a-Half International.

A year later Trotsky continued to be adamantly hostile to Sneevliet and his party. In a memorandum sent to the International Communist League in which he commented on the various anti-Stalinist Communist groups, he claimed: "The Brandlerites, Urbahns, and Sneevliet all agree that our policies are sectarian."⁵ Later, he queried, "Is it necessary to pause at Sneevliet? He swears that he has nothing in common with the Second International. But we don't believe in oaths. . . . Can you respect political people who throw dust in the eyes of the workers. . . ?"⁶

However, by early 1933, when Trotsky began to change his own position on the question of remaining an "opposition" to the Comintern, his attitude toward the Sneevliet group also began to modify. When, shortly after the Nazis came to power, the Comintern was planning a world antifascist conference in Amsterdam, Trotsky suggested a tactic for his followers at such a meeting. He wrote to the International Secretariat that "we will have to try to make agreements with organizations such as the party (and the trade unions) of Sneevliet in Holland, the SAP in

Germany, and other similar organizations."⁷ Obviously Trotsky was not yet thinking in terms of uniting with the Sneevliet party in the same organization, but he had begun to think of the Dutch leader as a possible ally. However, the combined efforts of the Trotskyists and Sneevliet were not very successful at the Amsterdam conference. The resolution they sponsored was defeated by a vote of 2,000 to 6.⁸

The RSP and the NAS

The "mass base" upon which Sneevliet primarily relied was the trade union group, the Nationale Arbeiders Sekretariaat (NAS) which had originally been established in 1893.⁹ Right after the First World War the NAS had close to 50,000 members out of a total of about 560,000 trade unionists in the country.¹⁰ At that time its leadership was divided between Communists and anarcho-syndicalists. At its 1923 conference the NAS voted by a narrow majority to affiliate with the Red International of Labor Unions rather than with the anarchosyndicalist International Workingmen's Association.¹¹

By the time of Sneevliet's return to the Netherlands in 1924, the NAS was "closely tied to the CPH" (Communist Party). Sneevliet was soon elected president of the NAS which, however, by that time only had about 14,000 members. Nonetheless, the NAS was a genuine trade union group and gave Sneevliet a base in his struggle within the Communist Party, as it was later to give him one within International Trotskyism.

The growing disagreement of Sneevliet and others with the Stalinization of the Comintern led to efforts of the Dutch pro-Stalinist Communist leaders who took over the party in 1925 to try to liquidate the NAS into the Social Democratic-controlled Netherlands Verbond van Vakverenigen (NVV). The struggle led to the withdrawal of Sneevliet and his associates from the Communist ranks in 1927. Between 1926 and 1929 the Sneevliet group centered on *Klassenstrijd* (Class Struggle), a theoretical jour-

nal. Then, in 1929, they organized the Revolutionary Socialistische Partij (RSP) as a rival to the Communist Party of the Netherlands.¹²

In 1933 the RSP won its first major electoral victory. Sneevliet had expressed strong support for sailors who mutinied on the cruiser *Zeven Provinciën* early in the year and had been jailed in consequence. However, when he was elected to parliament shortly afterward, the government was forced to release him.¹³ By 1933 the RSP had about 1,000 members.¹⁴

The Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party

The Establishment of a Dutch Section

Sneevliet had gone to Copenhagen to confer with Trotsky during his visit to the Danish capital in November 1932.¹⁵ In the months that followed the dissident Dutch Communists and the Trotskyists moved increasingly close to one another, until finally they joined forces. This evolution was due principally to the drastic change in the position of Trotsky and his followers, which resulted in removing the principal barrier which had theretofore existed between Sneevliet and his followers on the one hand, and Trotsky and his on the other.

In March 1933, after the coming to power of Hitler and the collapse of the German Communist Party, Trotsky had finally come out in favor of the establishment of a rival party to the KPD. By the summer of that year he had gone the whole way to argue the need for new communist parties everywhere, and for a Fourth International. This was the position which Sneevliet and his associates had long held.

This rapprochement was exemplified in various ways. In April 1933 Trotsky wrote Jan Frankel with regard to Sneevliet's trial for support of the mutinous sailors, urging that "the press of the Opposition must dedicate at least a small article to the courageous conduct of Sneevliet. He has shown in this

circumstance that he is an authentic revolutionary. . . ."¹⁶ In the following month he again wrote Frankel, urging "the mobilizing of all kinds of sympathizers and semi-sympathizers of our organization," and suggesting that "the organization of Sneevliet could send a special delegation on the question of Rakovsky, Victor Serge, and others on the one hand, Chen-Du-xiu on the other," referring to campaigns on behalf of prisoners of the Stalinist and Chiang Kai-shek regimes.¹⁷

In August 1933 Sneevliet met at some length with Trotsky in France. At that time they and Jakob Walcher decided to issue (in one form or another) what came to be known as the Declaration of the Four in favor of the establishment of a new International. Trotsky reported to Max Shachtman that "Sneevliet was in my home and we were in accord on everything."

Trotsky also wrote Shachtman that Sneevliet had agreed that the Dutch RSP would join the International Left Opposition, an event which in fact occurred on September 21, 1933. Trotsky added that that "means 950 members and support in the form of a trade union organization of 23,000 members."¹⁸ With the affiliation of the RSP with the ILO, Sneevliet became a member of the International Secretariat.¹⁹

The RSP was only one of two Dutch organizations which signed the Declaration of the Four. The other was the Independent Socialist Party (Onafhankelijke Socialistische Partij—OSP). The origins of the OSP and RSP were quite different, and the task of merging them into a single section of the international Trotskyist movement proved a rather difficult one.

The OSP was formed as a result of a left-wing schism in the Dutch Social Democratic Labor Party in 1932. It had two principal leaders, Peter J. Schmidt and Jacques De Kadt. Schmidt had until 1932 always been a Social Democrat, although editor since 1928 of a left-wing journal of the party, *De Socialist*. De Kadt, on the other hand, had been a founding member of the Communist Party but had quit it in 1924 and had founded his

own group, the Bond van Kommunistische Strijd en Propagandclub (BSKP). In 1929 the BSKP had merged into the Social Democratic Labor Party and De Kadet had become a co-editor of *De Socialist*.²⁰

Within the OSP leadership, De Kadet was clearly opposed to his party's becoming part of an International dominated by Trotsky and his followers. Rather, he apparently hoped to convert the London Bureau (IAG—containing the British ILP, Norwegian Labor Party, SAP of Germany, and other groups) into the new Fourth International. Throughout the latter part of 1933 and the early months of 1934 Trotsky polemicized with De Kadet, accusing him of "centrism."²¹ In the middle of 1934 De Kadet and his supporters left the OSP, thus facilitating the unification of the OSP and the RSP.²²

The merger of the RSP and OSP finally took place on March 3, 1935, with the formation of the Revolutionair Socialistische Arbeiders Partij (Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party—RSAP).²³ As Trotsky wrote to James Cannon shortly before the unification of the two groups, it had taken place under somewhat peculiar circumstances insofar as the international Trotskyist movement was concerned:

The OSP, which will form the majority of the membership of the new party, belonged to the IAG before the amalgamation and is not inclined to give up its affiliation to this body. Therefore, our section of the new party will also come into this organization. At the same time, the leaders of the new party want to arrive at some sort of personal basis of unity with the International Communist League. The idea is that the leaders of both groups, Sneevliet and Schmidt, become members of the International Secretariat. . . . It would be absolutely false, however, for us to make withdrawal from the IAG a condition for the establishment of the new party. Further experience will soon show whether the continued affiliation of

the Dutch party to this thoroughly confused and centrist organization can be of any good use.²⁴

This ambiguous relationship of the Dutch section of the Trotskyist movement with the London Bureau was to continue so long as the RSAP continued to constitute the Dutch section of International Trotskyism. It was, indeed, to become one of the principal factors determining the ultimate withdrawal of the RSAP from the international Trotskyist movement.

The RSAP was, in Trotskyist terms at least, a party of some significance. It not only controlled the NAS trade union group but also had some influence within the Socialist Democratic NVV labor federation, in which the OSP had operated.²⁵ It was likewise active in organizations of the unemployed, where the OSP had in 1934 been influential in a "revolt" of those without work.²⁶

The RSAP also had a youth organization, the Revolutionair Socialistisch Jeugd-Verbond (RSJV), founded at a congress on March 24, 1935. Although Trotsky boasted that it had 5,000 members, it in fact apparently had about 500.²⁷

The RSAP had some modest electoral influence. Aside from its member of parliament, Sneevliet, it also had some representation at other levels. In municipal elections held about four months after the formation of the party, it was reported that "the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party made an excellent showing, electing their candidates in many cities. The RSAP now commands a total of twenty seats in various municipal administrations, an increase of nine over the last election."²⁸

The Alienation of the RSAP From International Trotskyism

The Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party was not to remain for long as the Dutch section of the international Trotskyist movement. Within a year of the establish-

ment of the RSAP there were clear indications that it was being alienated from the International.

A number of issues arose between Sneevliet and his associates in the Dutch party on the one hand, and Trotsky and the International Secretariat on the other. The most important of these were relations with the London Bureau, attitudes towards the Spanish Civil War, the question of officially founding the Fourth International, and the trade union policies of the Netherlands party.

Even before the unification of the RSP and OSP to establish the RSAP, it was clear that Trotsky had considerable disagreement with the leaders of both Dutch groups on the issues which were to arise with the RSAP. For instance, he wrote Walter Held in November 1933 that "the trade union question, such as it exists in Holland, has not been discussed. Even if it should be revealed that we have divergences on this question with Comrade Sneevliet, it would be totally inopportune to take up this discussion now, because it would aid the opportunist elements of the OSP against Sneevliet and his friends.

...²⁹

Similarly, in February 1935 Trotsky wrote Sneevliet about relations with the London Bureau (IAG): "The ICL must maintain for itself complete freedom of movement and criticism with regard to the Amsterdam Bureau. That we should change our attitude toward the IAG after the Paris conference, I, for one, consider well-nigh impossible. Shall we have to change our minds in the future? The future itself will instruct us as to that.

...³⁰

These and other issues did not go away with the unification of the two Dutch groups aligned with International Trotskyism. This became clear in a long letter which Trotsky wrote to the Central Committee of the RSAP in July 1936. It dealt with virtually all of the issues which were to bring about a break of the RSAP with International Trotskyism.

In this letter, dated July 15-16, 1936, Trotsky was discussing a forthcoming meeting of the International which the RSAP had expressed certain reservations about attending. He went over various questions which the Dutch had raised. The first concerned the London Bureau:

It seems to you superfluous to have to adopt a position toward the London Bureau at the conference. *Under no circumstances* can I express my agreement with this. The worst obstacle for us, the most malignant enemy, is the London Bureau and its affiliated organizations. Your cartoonist, whom I always admire, recently depicted the Second and Third Internationals as two dogs let loose upon the Fourth International by imperialism. Unfortunately, he forgot to present the small mangy cur who scampers around our legs, snarls at us, snaps at our heels and seeks by this to prevent us from finishing off the big dogs. This is no subordinate question.³¹

Many leading Dutch comrades believe they can be of service to the Fourth International by contact with the London Bureau, that is, by collaboration with the latter and not by means of unremitting struggle against it. For a great number of comrades, however, contact with the London Bureau signifies nothing but a break with the Fourth International. I considered it absolutely necessary to bring to the attention of the Dutch comrades this deepgoing [*sic*] difference of opinion before they adopt their final decision.³²

Trotsky also dealt with the question of the Spanish POUM, a party forged by a merger of Andrés Nin and the former Trotskyist group there with the Right Opposition Bloque Obrero y Campesino led by Joaquín Maurín: "I now come to Spain. In one of his most recent letters, Comrade Sneevliet, in the name of the Central Committee of the party, took up the defense of the Maurín-

Nin party against my allegedly exaggerated or too sharp attacks. This appears to me to be not only unjustified but also incomprehensible. . . .³³ Trotsky went on to say: "At the moment when Nin's bankruptcy became clear even to his own supporters, he united with the nationalist-Catalonian philistine Maurín, breaking off all relations with us by the declaration that 'he understands nothing of Spanish affairs.' In reality, Nin understands nothing of revolutionary policy or of Marxism."³⁴

Trotsky then turned to the RSAP itself. He said that "the great weakness of the Dutch party seems to me to be the lack of a program of action. For more than a year we have had an exchange of opinions with Sneevliet on this score. Insofar as I may permit myself a judgment, the agitation of the party seems to me to rest far too much upon personal improvisations, upon impressions of the day or week, and therefore bears a dispersed, diluted, and not a concentrated character."³⁵

The continued existence of the small NAS trade union group under RSAP control particularly annoyed Trotsky:

On the trade union question too I cannot share the policy of our fraternal Dutch party. . . . I see no place for the NAS. When the great strike wave begins in Holland, which should be regarded as highly probable if not certain, the reformist trade unions will grow mightily and absorb fresh elements into their ranks, and in such a period the NAS will appear to the masses as an incomprehensible splinter organization. In consequence, the masses will also become unreceptive to the correct slogans of the RSAP and the leadership of the NAS. But if all the members of the RSAP and the best NAS elements were inside the reformist trade unions, during the impending upsurge they could become the axis of crystallization of the left wing and later on the decisive force in the labor movement. . . .³⁶

At this point Trotsky clearly was not desirous of a break with Sneevliet and the RSAP. He ended his letter by saying that "there are my explanations, dear comrades. I greatly regret that I cannot meet with you . . . for I am certain that a personal discussion would eliminate every shadow of discord between us. But even without my presence, the conference will surely eliminate the accumulated misunderstandings and create better conditions for further collaboration. In this spirit I extend you my hand in all friendship and wish you the best of success."³⁷

Sneevliet finally attended the conference for the Fourth International which met from July 29-31, 1936. There he expressed strong opposition to any move to establish the Fourth International in the proximate future. After the first day Sneevliet left the conference in protest against inclusion on the agenda of the meeting of a resolution on the trade union question.³⁸

This resolution, which clearly was a criticism of the trade union policy of the RSAP, maintained that "to not have within the reformist unions (and thus in the factories) all disposable forces would be the equivalent of rendering them insignificant, of compromising the IV International." It added that it was the obligation "of all the organizations of the IV International . . . to intervene systematically and intensely in the reformist union, to consider this work as their primordial task."³⁹

The Break Between the RSAP and the Fourth International

Georges Vereeken maintained that shortly after the conference for the Fourth International Trotsky decided to break with Sneevliet and the leadership of the RSAP. When Erwin Wolfe, Trotsky's secretary, left Norway for Brussels early in September 1936, he was commissioned by Trotsky to undertake to engineer the break under conditions

which would be as favorable as possible for the Fourth International.⁴⁰

Wolfe put forth his plan for undermining Sneevliet and splitting the RSAP in a letter dated December 18, 1936, which he wrote to two members of the German IKD who were then resident in the Netherlands. Verreen reproduced parts of that letter:

[T]hat the struggle against Sneevliet is inevitable there is no doubt. But when one has used 'tu' for so many years, one cannot suddenly and without preparation publicly denounce the 'Dutch muddler.' We must not forget that if we know of what Sneevliet is guilty, the rank and file of the different parties don't know anything. In the struggle against Sneevliet, we must above all have them on our side.

[I]f this is going to the point of a definitive rupture, we have to be left with something in Holland. Right now we have virtually no support. . . . [W]e have to occupy ourselves with the youth, for the older people seem to be completely under the influence of Sneevliet. . . . In spite of all we shall be able to do something with the youth. . . . Only after we have prepared the ground by artillery fire will we sound the assault.⁴¹

By the middle of 1937 the RSAP had definitely broken with the International Secretariat. Among the issues which brought the split were the refusal of the RSAP to send its youth group into the Young Social Democrats; the refusal to merge the NAS into the Social Democratic trade union group NW; and strong support by the RSAP for the Spanish POUM in the face of continuing severe criticism of the POUM by Trotsky and the International Secretariat.⁴² A resolution of the founding conference of the Fourth International noted "the final departure of such alien elements as Sneevliet and Verreen."⁴³

With the break of the RSAP with International Trotskyism a small minority re-

mained associated with the Fourth International. A group of German Trotskyists in Antwerp and a few Flemish members of the Belgian party helped these dissidents to publish a journal of their own.⁴⁴

The dissidents established what they called the Bolshevik-Leninist Group, which Pierre Naville reported to the founding conference of the Fourth International had about fifty members.⁴⁵ However, as the Dutch Trotskyist periodical *De Internationale* reported in May 1972, this group "was very isolated and weak, while up until the war the RSAP continued to number in the thousands and to have real influence among sections of the working class."⁴⁶ The Bolshevik-Leninist Group published a paper, *De Enige Weg*, between February 1938 and February 1940.⁴⁷ Most of its members lived in Rotterdam.⁴⁸

The Last Years of the RSAP

With the break between the RSAP and the Fourth International the Dutch party became definitively associated with the London Bureau. By that time the remnants of the International Communist Opposition (ICO), the Right Opposition counterpart to Trotsky's Left Opposition, had also joined forces with the London Bureau. As a consequence, the periodicals of the ICO and its affiliates reported on the activities of the RSAP as a "brother party."

In September 1939 Jay Lovestone wrote in *Workers Age*, the New York periodical of the Independent Labor League (the U.S. affiliate of the ICO and London Bureau), about the RSAP's progress in recent municipal elections: "We take our hats off to our brother party in Holland. In the present situation it is a mighty achievement for revolutionary socialists to hold their own. But to score a victory in the teeth of menacing reaction, to advance the cause of militant socialism despite the fatal Stalinist betrayal of the principles and ideas of Marx and Lenin, is a victory of vital significance." The RSAP had

gotten 41,000 votes, of which 17,000 had been cast in Rotterdam as against 7,000 in the 1935 municipal poll. The RSAP had won two seats in the Rotterdam council instead of the one it had had before the election.⁴⁹

With the overrunning of the Netherlands by the Nazis in May 1940, the RSAP was outlawed. In the underground it established the Marx-Lenin-Luxemburg Front (MLL Front), which later changed its name to Third Front. The orthodox Trotskyists joined this group.⁵⁰ Their organization had disappeared when its principal leaders, Herman Peters and De Wilde, had been arrested.⁵¹

In the underground, Sneevliet and his associates published the periodical *Spartakus*. They also brought out a number of leaflets, including works by Rosa Luxemburg.⁵²

Between February and March 1942 most of the principal leaders of the RSAP were arrested by the Nazis. Eight were condemned to death: Hendrik Sneevliet; Abraham Menist, RSAP and NAS leader in Rotterdam; Willem Dolleman, leader of the pro-Fourth International group within the MLL Front; Jan Shriefer, a trade unionist; Jan Koeslag, RSAP leader in Arnhem; Cornelis Gerritsen (who committed suicide); Jan Edel, NAS leader in Alkmaar; and Rein Witteveen, printer of the group's underground publications.⁵³ These people (with Gerritsen's obvious exception) were executed on April 13, 1942.⁵⁴ At least twelve other figures in the RSAP, including the wives of several of those who were executed, were sent to jail and concentration camps by the Nazis.⁵⁵

The disappearance of the leadership of the RSAP meant the virtual end of the party. Although some anti-Fourth International people formed the Spartakus Group, it wound up "in a blind alley." The RSAP was not revived after World War II.⁵⁶

Dutch Trotskyism After the RSAP

Some of the sympathizers with the Fourth International had not left the RSAP. During

the underground period after the Nazi invasion, some of these people objected to the increasingly anti-Soviet positions of Sneevliet and his associates. They were threatened with expulsion when they refused to distribute tracts equating Stalin and Hitler. The Nazi decimation of the RSAP underground apparently forestalled this move.

After the arrest and execution of most of the principal leaders of the RSAP a few of the remaining Trotskyists organized the Committee van Revolutionaire Marxisten (CRM). Starting in June 1942 it began to publish in a very rudimentary form a periodical, *De Rode October*. When in the summer of 1945 it became possible to send someone to try to reestablish contact with the Fourth International, Max Perthus, one of the few survivors of the RSAP leadership, went first to Brussels and then to Paris. The provisional leadership of the Fourth International then functioning in the French capital recognized the CRM as the Dutch section of the FI.⁵⁷

The CRM changed its name to Revolutionair Communistische Partij (RCP) in December 1945.⁵⁸ It was given a consultative seat on the International Executive Committee (IEC) of the Fourth International which was elected at the first postwar conference of the International in Paris in March 1946. The Dutch member was given the right to a voice but not a vote in the IEC.⁵⁹

During the more than six years in which the RCP existed it never had more than 200 members. Herman Pieterse has noted that it became "more and more isolated in the unions through the split and downturn of the Stalinist dominated EVC (Eenheids Vak Centrale—Unity Trades Congress) and with hardly any members in the Social Democratic NVV. . . ."⁶⁰

Dutch Trotskyist Entrism

In March 1952 the Dutch Trotskyists decided to change their strategy and experiment with "entrism." In that month it was decided that the RCP would dissolve and its

members enter the Netherlands Labor Party (PVDA), the post-World War II Dutch affiliate of the Socialist International.⁶¹

This decision was in conformity with the policy then being advocated by Michel Raptis (Pablo), the secretary of the Fourth International. Pieterse has commented that "the entry decision of the Dutch RCP . . . in 1952 was entirely parallel to the similar decisions of other European sections. It was directly connected to the faction fight in the International, the Dutch decision being speeded up by Pablo in order to have some initial success."⁶² As Pieterse says, the Trotskyists thereupon "disappeared as an independently visible force."⁶³

Only about sixty of the one hundred members which the RCP had early in 1952 joined the PVDA. However, according to Pieterse, "In the first stage of the entry everything worked well: better union work, some recruitment, and in 1954 the establishing of an opposition paper by and large dominated by the Trotskyists, *Socialistisch Perspectief*."⁶⁴

The Trotskyists within the Labor Party also succeeded in organizing a faction, the Social Democratisch Centrum, to which they recruited a number of other Labor Party members. In 1957 the Trotskyists established an open theoretical review, *De Internationale*. Their group also published an *Internal Bulletin* for circulation among their own members.⁶⁵

In 1959-60 the leadership of the Labor Party mounted a campaign against the Trotskyists. As a consequence the latter were forced to choose between staying in the PVDA and giving up their factional group, the Social Democratisch Centrum, or withdrawing from the Labor Party. A majority decided to stay in the PVDA where for several years they were allowed to continue to publish *Socialistisch Perspectief*. In 1960 this faction gave up all connection with the international Trotskyist movement.

Between 1965 and 1967 the group which remained within the Labor Party cooperated

with the Flemish ex-Trotskyist group which remained in the Belgian Socialist Party when most of the Trotskyists were thrown out of that party, to publish *Links (Left)*. The leader of the group was Herman Drenth, who was elected to parliament on the PVDA ticket in the 1970s.⁶⁶

Dutch Trotskyism Since 1960

The minority of Dutch Trotskyists who continued to maintain relations with the international movement (its Pabloite faction) went on with the publication of the *Internal Bulletin* and *De Internationale*, both of which were abandoned by the group which stayed inside the Labor Party. Pieterse has noted that *De Internationale* came out as a "small mimeographed publication" between 1957 and 1965, after which it was a printed eight-page tabloid published "more or less as a monthly through 1965-72."⁶⁷

Before the split in the Trotskyist ranks they had had considerable activity in the Ban the Bomb movement.⁶⁸ After the split the group remaining loyal to Trotskyism was active principally in three areas: some of their members continued to work within the Labor Party; another group worked within a dissident Communist group, the *Socialistische Workers Partij (SWP)*; the third major field of activity was "anti-imperialist work, mainly solidarity work for Algeria, and later for Cuba."⁶⁹

The SWP had been formed by a group within the Communist Party (CPN) which resisted efforts of the CPN to merge the party's separate trade union group into the NVV. "This conflict coincided with some Yugoslav influences on the minority." They formed the Brug-groep in 1958, "clearly hoping to be reintegrated with the support of the East European parties, and after some rather demoralizing experiences with the reality of Stalinism" established the SWP.⁷⁰ However, unable to offer any meaningful alternative to the CPN, the SWP finally dis-

solved in 1965, most of its remaining members joining the Pacifist Socialist Party (PSP).⁷¹

Meanwhile, the Trotskyists' numbers and influence had declined drastically. There were perhaps fifteen members left by the mid-1960s. When Michel Pablo broke with the United Secretariat in 1965-66, what remained of the Dutch section joined forces with him. As Pieterse observed, "By the end of the sixties Trotskyism was at an all time low, but through the propaganda maintained by the Pablo group some new people were attracted to Trotskyism. This however did not result in significant organizational growth."⁷²

In May 1972 the group around *De Internationale* decided to abandon Pablo's International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency, accusing it of "moving further and further away from the international Trotskyist movement and from Bolshevism." The group resolved to join the United Secretariat.⁷³

A small minority of the *De Internationale* group decided to stay with Pablo, and reorganized as the Comité van Revolutionaire Marxisten. It was still in existence in the early 1980s but, according to Pieterse, it was "even less Trotsky-minded than Pablo himself."⁷⁴

In July 1972 the majority of the *De Internationale* group reorganized as the Revolutionair Communistische Bond (RCB) which was accepted as a sympathizing section of USEC. Pieterse wrote that the RCB "was largely composed of intellectuals and students, and only a few workers without a strong union base. It did not participate in the elections, but generally called for a vote for either one of the two left-wing parties, PSP or CPN. It would probably be more correct to say that the New Left upsurge had an influence on the Trotskyists in the late '60s than the other way round. Anyway, the founding of the RCB, basis for the reorganization of Trotskyism in this country, would have been unthinkable without the student movement in the '60s."⁷⁵

The RCB established relations with the Proletaries Links (Proletarian Left), which had recently been thrown out of the Pacifist Socialist Party. Proletaries Links had been established in 1971 "after a resounding electoral defeat of the party, but it continued an older opposition current animated by some former members of the Fourth International and some left socialists. Some young people who became Trotskyists while in the PSP also participated in the group. . . . The main planks of its platform were: reorganization of the party, directing it to the working class, elaboration of a strategy of transitional demands." The group had twenty-five percent of the delegates to the 1971 PSP congress, but was expelled from the party in the following year.⁷⁶

In December 1974 the RCB and Proletaries Links merged to establish the Internationale Kommunistenbond (IKB), which became the Dutch section of the United Secretariat. A few years after its establishment, it adopted an "industrial" orientation as a result of which, as Pieterse reported in 1983, "now we have some influence in locals and factory branches of the most important union, the Industriebond." He added that "by now most people joining the IKB are young workers or high school students."

For the first time in forty years a Trotskyist organization, the IKB participated in elections in the late 1970s. In 1978 it had candidates in most important towns in that year's provincial and municipal elections. In 1981 it had nominees throughout the country in the general election and in the following year ran people in the Amsterdam and Rotterdam municipal polls. In the 1981 case the IKB received a total of 1,900 votes out of five million. Pieterse attributed this modest result principally "to the pressure to give a 'useful' vote to one of the smaller socialist parties, which are represented in most representative institutions."⁷⁷

By 1978 the IKB had changed its name to Socialistische Arbeiders Partij (Socialist Workers Party—SAP). At the time of a series of strikes by public service workers in Octo-

Trotskyism in New Zealand

ber of that year the SAP carried out "large-scale leaflet distributions." Pieterse writes that "Where possible, the SAP members played an active role in the action committees and worked in particular to build solidarity between the public and private sectors. . . . The SAP's proposals for working toward a general strike of the public sector were generally well received."⁷⁶ No general strike of public employees in fact took place.

At least one other branch of International Trotskyism had at least some following in the Netherlands by the middle 1980s. "Comrades . . . from the Netherlands" were reported to have attended a meeting of the International Socialist Tendency in Great Britain in September 1984.⁷⁹ No further information is available about this group.

Conclusion

By the mid-1980s the Dutch Trotskyist movement was one of the more modest national groups in International Trotskyism. In spite of the pre-World War II importance of the RSAP, the movement had come close to the point of extinction by the mid-1960s. As in a number of other countries, the practice of "entrism" in the 1950s had at first resulted in substantial gains, but in the end resulted in more confusion than advances. Also, as had happened with the Trotskyist movement in several other nations, the Dutch were able to capitalize, at least to a modest degree, on the student uprising of the latter half of the 1960s.

Trotskyism did not get established in New Zealand until the end of the 1960s. This is in spite of the fact that documents of the Fourth International and its several factions made reference as early as the beginning 1950s to "the New Zealand section." In those documents the New Zealand section was in fact a euphemism for the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, which continued to claim that under the Voorhis Act of 1940 it could not be officially affiliated with any international organization.

Trotskyism came into existence in New Zealand as a result of the student militancy of the 1960s. A group of students at Victoria University in Wellington decided in 1965 to establish a Socialist Club, which in the following year began a periodical, *Red Spark*. However, as George Fyson, in recounting the history of the first ten years of New Zealand Trotskyism observed, "we realized that more was needed than a university socialist club and a magazine with some good articles in it. The tasks posed in fighting for socialism in New Zealand called for a revolutionary socialist political party, built around a clear political program and analysis." As a consequence, after the visit in mid-1969 of "a leader of the Fourth International," the Socialist Action League (SAL) was organized by seven people in August 1959. One of the first activities of the new group was to run a candidate in the general election of that year.

The SAL began to publish (at first in mimeographed form, then in newsprint) a new periodical, *Socialist Action*. They also began to gain adherents elsewhere in the country. In Christchurch, most of the members of the Progressive Youth Movement, originally established by the Communist Party, formed a local branch of the SAL in late 1969.

Six months later a branch was also established in Auckland. In August 1970 the first national conference of the Socialist Action League was held.

The membership was very young, but "we had some important sources to learn from, particularly the international heritage which the Fourth International brought to us. Above all this came via *Intercontinental Press*, the weekly news magazine published in New York. . . . Personal contact with sections and leaders of the Fourth International were also valuable. The role of one individual in particular deserves mention: that of Joseph Hansen. . . ."

For the first four years the Socialist Action League was principally involved with agitation around the issue of the Vietnam War. Subsequently they also became "uncompromising defenders of the rights of Maoris and Pacific Islanders against police harassment, against the immigration laws, for Maori land rights," as well as championing women's rights, and in due time, becoming somewhat immersed in trade union struggles.¹

By the early 1980s the Socialist Action League had six local branches. These were in Auckland, Tokorda, Hastings, Palmerston North, Wellington, and Christchurch.² At that time the SAL was reported by Russell Johnson, its national secretary, to be

a small organization of 100-odd members . . . entirely made up of working-class and student youth who first entered politics in the period from the later 1960s. There are no veterans from earlier periods or other countries in our leadership, although a former CP member from the 1950s played a role in the founding of the League. . . .

The SAL's main industrial activity is in the unions associated with the meat processing industry---New Zealand's largest single industry. . . . The axis of our work has not been to build up a layer of SAL meat union officials, but to work with whatever forces possible to strengthen

class-struggle motion and political consciousness in the Union. Good working relations have been built up with those sections of the union leadership and militants who are genuinely striving to build a fighting union. . . . No other left-wing organization has an organized presence in the meat industry.³

The electoral activity of the Socialist Action League was somewhat sporadic. It did have nominees in the 1969, 1975, and 1978 contests, but did not have them in those of 1972 and 1981. Johnson noted that "always our electoral intervention has focused on vigorously campaigning for the election of a Labor government and explaining the need for the unions to struggle to commit the Labor Party to class-struggle policies. Most of our members are also members of the Labor Party. But the main focus of our Labor Party concentration is inside the industrial unions, encouraging them to act politically in the framework of the Labor Party."

The SAL was particularly active among the Maoris, the indigenous people of New Zealand, and among the immigrant workers from the Pacific Islands: "The League's involvement in the Maori community is mainly through its industrial base. A large proportion of *Socialist Action's* readers are Maori and Pacific Island workers. The first significant recruitment of Maoris and Pacific Islanders to the League took place at the end of 1981 when a layer of Polynesian youth who had earlier joined the League's youth group, the Young Socialists, fused with the SAL."⁴

The concern of the SAL for the cause of the Maoris was reflected in their periodical. Thus, the February 4, 1983, issue of *Socialist Action* had a lead editorial on "Why Labor Movement Should Support Maori Rights."⁵ A regular feature of the newspaper was the devotion of its last page to "News and Comment on the Struggle for Maori Rights."

During the controversy within the United Secretariat which developed in the early

1980s between the Socialist Workers Party of the United States and the majority of USEC, the Socialist Action League of New Zealand tended to side with the American SWP. This led to a certain cooling of relations between the SAL and the Australian SWP. As early as January 1982 Russell Johnson attended a National Committee Plenum of the Australian party at which the New Zealand group's policies were severely criticized, and Johnson defended them.⁶

The international orientation of the Socialist Action League was reflected in its Ninth National Conference from December 27, 1984–January 1, 1985. The meeting featured speeches by Mel Mason and Doug Jensen of the American SWP, as well as Nita Keig and Deb Shookal, who had been expelled from the Australian SWP. The SAL's sharing of the U.S. SWP's belief in the centrality of conflicts in Central America to the world revolution was also reflected in its decision to have its fractions in the unions put primary emphasis on that issue. As Eileen Morgan, in presenting the conference's organization report, observed, "Systematic work to deepen our workmates' understanding about what is at stake in Central America today will be the central question our fractions take up, providing us with a national focus for our work as revolutionaries in the unions."⁷

Although the SAL had supported the Labor Party in the 1984 election campaign, it was argued at the conference that "despite the origins of this government in the Labor Party, and despite the organizational roots of this party in the trade unions, the government of David Lange and Roger Douglas is a capitalist government, not fundamentally different from any other." Speakers were particularly critical of the popular enthusiasm raised over the Lange government's refusal to allow nuclear-powered U.S. warships to dock in New Zealand.

Although no figures were released at the SAL conference concerning its membership, Eileen Morgan did claim that the majority

of the League and its youth group were industrial workers and that the party's most important political work was carried out in the two national fractions it had in the meat and food industry unions.⁸

The Socialist Action League, which was affiliated with the United Secretariat, was still by the early 1980s the only active Trotskyist organization in New Zealand. Russell Johnson noted that a Spartacist League group, formed in 1970, had disappeared after the expulsion of one of its founders, Owen Gager, and the transfer of most of the rest of the members to Australia. He also noted that "The Healyites . . . have made a number of attempts to establish themselves here under the name Socialist Labor League. I think they may still have two or three members in Auckland."⁹

Nicaraguan Trotskyism

There was no Trotskyist organization in Nicaragua until after the Sandinista Revolution of 1979. Immediately following the revolution members of the Simón Bolívar Brigade, who had been recruited from several Latin American countries by the Bolshevik Faction (led by Nahuel Moreno) of the United Secretariat to participate in the Sandinista armed struggle, set to work to build a Trotskyist party in that country. According to a U.S. Morenoist source, the Nicaraguans recruited to the banner of the Fourth International were a group which "arose from a division in the FSLN which moved briefly towards Maoism at the beginning of the decade of the '70s before definitively siding with Trotskyism."¹

The new Trotskyist group, the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria (LMR), quickly came into conflict with the Sandinista leadership because of their criticisms of that leadership, and the foreign members of the Simón Bolívar Brigade were arrested and deported. At that point the United Secretariat officially sided with the Sandinista government and ordered the dissolution of the USEC groups in Central America. This provoked the split of the Bolshevik Faction with USEC.²

In 1982 it was reported that the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria was publishing the newspaper *El Socialista*.³ By early 1985 the group had been legalized, but not in time to participate in the November 1984 constituent assembly elections and not before being required to change the proposed name of the group. They had originally wanted to use Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, but the Sandinista government authorities rejected that designation on the grounds that it was too similar to the Partido Socia-

lista de Nicaragua, the country's traditional Stalinist party.

The name the Trotskyists finally selected was Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT). The party reported that its monthly periodical, *El Socialista*, was selling more than 1,000 copies and that its members were active in the unions as well as in the militia, and some were serving in the army.

The Trotskyists by their own admission were in the left-wing opposition to the Sandinista government. Among other propositions they were pushing were the distribution of all land to the peasants and all industries to their workers. They were also demanding cessation of payments on the foreign debt and repudiation of that debt.⁴

The Nicaraguan Trotskyists continued to put forward an orthodox Trotskyist program. They urged reconstruction of the regime on the basis of soviets, demanded expropriation of virtually all means of production and distribution, and illegalization of "all political parties which are not today for the unconditional military defeat of the contras." Finally, they proclaimed that "Nicaragua needs a revolutionary party of the workers which makes this struggle and this program a reality through gaining the necessary support of the masses and through the constant mobilization of the workers and peasants."⁵

The Sandinistas apparently maintained fraternal relations with at least some of those national groups remaining affiliated with USEC. Thus, in mid-1984 the Sandinista Youth signed a joint declaration with the youth organization of the USEC affiliate in Switzerland, and this document was endorsed by USEC youth groups in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, West Germany, and Italy.⁶

Norwegian Trotskyism

Trotskyism in Norway got its first inspiration from German Trotskyist exiles. The most important of these was Walter Held, who served as Trotsky's secretary during the period that Trotsky was in that country. The first organization of Trotsky's followers was formed in the spring of 1937, and it began, together with the Danish Trotskyists, issuing a periodical, *Oktober*, which continued to appear until September 1939.¹

Trotsky sent a letter to the Norwegian Trotskyists which appeared in the first number of their periodical, which came out early in 1938. After denouncing the way he had been treated by the Labor Party government of Norway, Trotsky wrote that "now I see that there are comrades in Norway of a completely different sort. The new selection of revolutionaries is doubly valuable because the new cadres are forming not around a victorious workers' state, but around a persecuted program. In the present world situation your title *Oktober* is more significant by far than the big dailies of the Second or Third International . . . I wish you the best revolutionary success."²

The most important figure in this early Norwegian Trotskyist group was Jeannette Olsen, a former member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.³

Walter Held fled to Sweden in April 1940 when the Nazis invaded Norway. The Trotskyists played a significant rôle in the underground resistance against the invaders. They particularly rallied support among the university students, and led student strikes on several occasions. They were also active in the trade union movement, particularly among the building trades workers of Oslo.

After the war the Norwegian Trotskyists carried out an entrism experience both in the Communist Party and in the Norwegian La-

bor Party. They also carried on more open activity through a political education association, the Marxist Club, which published a journal *Optakt (Revolt)*.³

The Trotskyist movement in Norway does not appear to have survived the difficult period of the 1950s and early 1960s. As in many other countries, Trotskyism in Norway revived as a result of the youth revolt of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In early 1973 it was reported that a new "group of sympathizers of the Fourth International," that is, of the United Secretariat, had been established. It was known as the Oktober-gruppe (October Group). In February of that year it sponsored a meeting which was addressed by Tariq Ali, then a principal figure in the British ussc affiliate, who spoke on "Internationalism in Revolutionary Strategy."⁵

In the late 1970s the Trotskyists entered the youth group of the Socialistisk Venstrepartia [Socialist Left Party—sv]. However, in 1981 they and some other elements were expelled from the sv, and they thereupon formed the Arbeidermaktsgruppe [Workers Power Group]. That organization was estimated in 1984 to have from sixty to seventy members.⁶

By the mid-1980s, the International Socialist Tendency also had at least some sympathizers in Norway. They were represented at a meeting of the Tendency in Great Britain in September 1984.⁷ No further information is available on this group.

Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI)

The rump International Committee of the Fourth International which the Healyites and the Lambertists had maintained during the 1960s broke up in the early 1970s. After their split with Gerry Healy and the Socialist Labor League of Great Britain, Pierre Lambert and the OCI of France in effect "ceded" the name of the International Committee to the Healyites. The Lambert faction reorganized as the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, widely known by its French initials as CORQI.¹

The actual establishment of CORQI took place at what the Lambertists called "the second session of the preconference," held July 1-4, 1972. The first session had been that of the International Committee held two years previously. The July 1972 meeting proclaimed: "There is no directing center, it is necessary to reconstruct the directing center on the principles of democratic centralism; that is the meaning of the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International." It also decided to foster the establishment of new national sections of CORQI, and if possible to summon a world congress for "the summer of 1973."² This 1973 session appears never to have taken place.

Either at its founding session in 1972, or sometime thereafter, the CORQI established an International Bureau as its principal organ of political leadership and an International Secretariat as its executive organ. Also, from time to time it held international meetings attended by delegates from its various national affiliates.

In 1976 the International Bureau decided

to try to call an "open conference" in Europe of all organizations which would agree with what it regarded as basic Trotskyist principles. No such fully "open" conference was held, but in August 1978 CORQI did sponsor a European meeting attended by people from Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. There is no indication that anyone except adherents of CORQI attended this session.³

Available information concerning the exact number of national affiliates of CORQI is rather limited. At its inception it may well have consisted of little more than the three member groups of the International Committee which had opposed Gerry Healy and the SLL, that is, the OCI of France, the POR of Guillermo Lora in Bolivia, and the League of Socialist Revolutionaries of Hungary, led by Balasz Nagy (Varga).

However, by 1980 the CORQI claimed affiliates in Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Portugal, Greece, Denmark, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Poland, France, and Germany in Europe. It also claimed sections in Algeria and Senegal in Africa.⁴

The history of the CORQI's affiliates in Latin America has been particularly episodic. At its inception only the POR of Bolivia belonged; somewhat later, an old Argentine group, *Política Obrera* (PO), also affiliated and brought with it at least a small organization in Chile. In 1978-79, however, a polemic arose between the CORQI leadership and that of *Política Obrera*, as a result of which the PO was expelled from the international group. In the midst of that dispute, although he apparently sympathized with the position of CORQI and not PO, Guillermo Lora pulled his faction of the Bolivian POR out of CORQI.⁵

Subsequently the CORQI gained an affiliate of some significance in Peru, the *Partido Obrero Marxista Revolucionario* (POMR). Its representatives played a leading role in a Latin American cadres school held in Paris in April 1979, with representatives present

from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, and Chile, as well as Peru. About a year and a half later CORQI paid special attention to the activities of its affiliates in Brazil and Venezuela.⁶

However, the short honeymoon of CORQI with the international faction of Nahuel Moreno in 1979–80 proved disastrous for CORQI's activities in Latin America. Both groups raided each others' Latin American affiliates during that period, and the Moreno faction came out the victors. By late 1983 CORQI claimed only one Latin American group of any significance, that of Brazil, with only tiny organizations in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, and Venezuela.⁷

Ten years after its establishment CORQI claimed at least small affiliated groups in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, and Great Britain in Europe. They also had the Latin American groups already noted. They had no affiliate in the United States, although there was one in Canada. Finally, CORQI had sections in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, and Ivory Coast in Africa. It had no Asian affiliates.⁸

Although CORQI people are frequently referred to as the "Lambertists," and there is no doubt that the most important affiliate of the group has been the OCI (subsequently Parti Communiste Internationaliste) of France headed by Pierre Lambert, there existed nothing of the extremely personalist atmosphere in CORQI which characterized the Posadas and Healyite international groups. There have been other significant leaders of stature in CORQI in addition to Lambert. Also CORQI has not lent itself to the kind of exceedingly idiosyncratic campaigns launched by its major figure which have been characteristic of both the Healyite International Committee and the Posadista Fourth International.

The principal positions maintained by CORQI since its inception can be summed up thus: With the events of 1968—principally the French general strike and the "Czech Spring"—there began a new period, proba-

bly the final one, in the crisis of both international capitalism and "the bureaucracy," that is the "caste" dominating the Stalinist states. The principal drawback to the victory of socialist revolution in this situation is the crisis of revolutionary leadership due to the degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals, and the destruction of the original Fourth International which began with the ascendancy of Pablo and the 1952–53 split. The primordial task, therefore, is the reconstruction of the Fourth International as the Party of the World Revolution, and it is that task to which the CORQI is dedicated.

Although CORQI had little or nothing more to do with the International Committee once it had broken with the Healy group, it did make overtures to the United Secretariat on several occasions. In April 1973 the International Bureau of CORQI decided to send a request to the United Secretariat to take part in USEC's proposed Tenth Congress. CORQI received a somewhat rude reply to the effect that this would be impossible unless the Lambertists would repudiate their "slandering" of the United Secretariat and would agree beforehand to accept all decisions of the Tenth Congress.⁹

In 1978 there were again negotiations between CORQI and the United Secretariat. In this connection a "public debate" took place between the two groups with the publication of their different points of view concerning specific issues.¹⁰ However, with the split of the Moreno faction from the United Secretariat and its temporary unification with CORQI in the so-called Parity Commission, these negotiations were abruptly ended.¹¹ After the failure of the unity efforts with the Moreno faction the Lambertists assumed the name Fourth International (International Center for Reconstruction).

By the mid-1980s the Fourth International [International Center of Reconstruction] remained one of the three more or less "mainstream" currents of international Trotskyism. Having at its core on the largest of the

national Trotskyist organizations, the French Parti Communiste Internationaliste, it had some strength in other European countries, more penetration in Arab and Black Africa than any other international faction, and a scattering of followers in Latin America. It had not moved in any striking manner away from the traditional positions of Trotskyism.

Trotskyism in Panama

The Trotskyist movement in the Republic of Panama went through two different phases. During the 1930s it was one of the earliest Latin American branches of International Trotskyism, but did not last for very long. Then in the 1970s it was revived in Panama and this time was of longer duration.

The principal organizer of the Trotskyist movement in Panama in the 1930s was Diogenes de la Rosa, a young trade union leader of some significance. He established the Partido Obrero Marxista-Leninista in 1934. For a short while it was the principal competitor of the Communist Party in organized labor and other mass movements.

The Partido Obrero Marxista-Leninista seems to have lasted only a little more than a year. In late 1935 its members joined the Socialist Party of Panama. This move does not appear to have been the kind of entrism recommended by Trotsky in that period, since the Trotskyists did not maintain any factional existence in the Socialist Party. Subsequently, de la Rosa became one of the major leaders of the Socialist Party (and ultimately one of the country's most distinguished diplomats), but he and his former Trotskyist colleagues lost all contact with International Trotskyism. No Panamanian section was reported to exist at the time of the Founding Congress of the Fourth International.¹

In 1975 the first Trotskyist organization to exist in Panama for forty years was established. This was the Fracción Socialista Revolucionaria, formed by a group who broke away from a guerrilla-oriented organization, the Circulo Camilo Torres. It began to publish a newspaper, *Revolución Socialista*. In an early statement, the group maintained that "the revisionism and reformism of the

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Communist parties and of the 'foquistas' (the heritage of the petty-bourgeois romanticism that reduces the Cuban experience to its purely military aspect), makes it impossible in Panama to respond in such a way as to provide leadership for the explosions of the class struggle."²

By 1977 the Fracción Socialista Revolucionaria had been converted into the Liga Socialista Revolucionaria (LSR--Revolutionary Socialist League) and it had become a sympathizing member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. It was at that time carrying on an energetic campaign against acceptance by Panama of the Canal Treaty recently signed with the United States.³

At the time of the split of the Bolshevik Faction from the United Secretariat, the Panamanian Trotskyist organization also split. The element still loyal to USEC was expelled, and formed the Movimiento Socialista Revolucionario (MSR).⁴ It was led by Miguel Antonio Bernal, a lawyer who was the legal adviser to the teachers' union, one of the most important labor groups in the country.⁵

Those who remained in the LSR ultimately changed the name of their group to Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores. It affiliated with the International Workers League (Fourth International), and was reported in 1982 to be publishing a periodical, *La Verdad Socialista*.⁶

One Latin American country in which Trotskyism emerged right after World War II was Peru. The movement there was almost unique in the variety of different experiences it went through in the subsequent forty years. It engaged in guerrilla activities in the 1960s, and a decade and a half later participated in electoral activities and succeeded in placing some candidates in the national legislature. As was true in many other countries, by the early 1980s Peruvian Trotskyism was split into several competing factions affiliated with different tendencies in the international movement.

Early Peruvian Trotskyism

Two elements were involved in the establishment of the first Trotskyist group in Peru. One consisted of young intellectuals, led by Francisco Abril de Vivero. The other was a group of Communist Party textile workers who felt that they had been betrayed by the party and who were led by Félix Zevallos and Leoncio Bueno.

These two elements joined to publish a periodical, *Cara y Sello (Facade and Reality)*. In August 1946 they established the Grupo Obrero Marxista, which began to publish *Revolución*. In 1947 they changed their name to Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR).

The new Peruvian Trotskyist group showed its loyalty to International Trotskyism in a manifesto first issued by the Grupo Obrero Marxista. It emphasized that only a "proletarian revolution" could carry out the program of the bourgeois democratic revolution, while at the same time begin-

Material for the period before 1969 is adapted from Robert J. Alexander: *Trotskyism in Latin America*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1973.

ning the process of socialist transformation of society.

In 1952 a young man who for several years was to be a major Peruvian Trotskyist leader joined the Partido Obrero Revolucionario. This was Ismael Frías.

In February 1953 the dictatorship of General Manuel Odría gave extensive publicity to the POR, claiming that it was engaging in a conspiracy to overthrow the military regime. The documentation published by the Odría regime indicated that the Trotskyists had three branches in Lima, one in Callao, and one in Arequipa. It also indicated that the POR was in more or less regular communication at that time with the Fourth International headquarters in Paris.

The POR split into two rival groups, both still using the name Partido Obrero Revolucionario, in 1956. The split in the Fourth International played a role in this division in the ranks of Peruvian Trotskyism, intensifying existing disagreements on the strategy and tactics the Trotskyists should follow in Peru.

One faction of the POR, of which Ismael Frías was the leading figure, aligned itself with Michel Pablo's International Secretariat of the Fourth International. Domestically it favored a policy of "entrism" into the Aprista Party, the country's principal mass party which was legalized again after the end of the Odría dictatorship and the election of President Manuel Prado in 1956. There existed a left wing within the Aprista ranks, and the Pabloite POR felt that if the Trotskyists entered the Aprista Party they might be able to gain the leadership of that opposition. However, there is no indication that the PORistas actually were accepted into the Aprista Party.

The pro-Pablo POR faction developed some trade union influence in the late 1950s. It controlled the union at the Fertisa plant, one of the country's major chemical companies, and also claimed some influence in the important Miners Federation of the Central Region.

The Pabloite POR suffered a new split in 1960. This was due to the attempts of J. Posadas, head of the Latin American Bureau of the International Secretariat, to interfere in the internal affairs of the Peruvian group. Ismael Frías, at the time a member of the Executive Committee of the International Secretariat, withdrew with his own supporters to form still another POR. This group soon dissolved, and what remained of the Pabloite POR joined the version of the Fourth International established under Posadas's leadership in 1962. It changed its name to Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskyista).

The POR(T) participated in municipal elections in 1966, running candidates in the isolated area of Tumbes, where it controlled a small peasants union. Their candidates received seventy-nine votes, 19 percent of the total. When the armed forces, under the leadership of General Juan Velasco, overthrew the elected government of President Fernando Belaúnde Terry late in 1968, the POR(T) announced its strong support for the new reformist military regime of Velasco.

Meanwhile the anti-Pablo faction of Peruvian Trotskyism had held its first congress in March 1957. After this meeting there was a conference of delegates of anti-Pablo parties from Peru, Chile, and Argentina which established the Secretariado Latinoamericano del Trotskismo Ortodoxo (SLATO). The principal leader and inspirer of SLATO was the Argentine Hugo Bressano, better known by his pseudonym of Nahuel Moreno.

Another national congress of the anti-Pablo POR took place in Arequipa in November 1960. It decided to try to undertake guerrilla war activities in Peru. This decision of the Peruvians was ratified by a meeting of SLATO in Buenos Aires early in 1961, and a promise of considerable financial aid for the Peruvians' guerrilla efforts was made, when Moreno arrived in Peru shortly afterward, however, he brought with him only a small part of the amount of money which had originally been promised. He did bring a particu-

lar concept of the kind of insurrectional activities which the Peruvian Trotskyists should try to put into operation. Instead of establishing a guerrilla army, they should organize peasants to seize the holdings of large landlords, and then arm the peasants to resist efforts to dislodge them from the land they had seized. This approach to the problem was endorsed by the anti-Pabloite Peruvian POR.

In December 1961 the anti-Pablo POR merged with a small dissident group from the Communist Party to form the Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria (FIR). It became the Peruvian section of the International Committee and ultimately of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

In 1962 a group of the FIR led by Hugo Blanco sought to carry out Moreno's strategy of rural insurrection in the La Convención Valley, in the department of Cuzco in southern Peru. Blanco had been elected agrarian reform secretary of the Cuzco Peasant Federation, and in that capacity led the peasants of La Convención in taking over land from the local landholders. They also formed armed defense units and in November 1962 carried out a raid on a local police station. Hugo Blanco was finally captured by the police in May 1963, by which time virtually all of the other Trotskyists who had been working with him were also in jail.

The efforts of Hugo Blanco and his colleagues were not completely fruitless from the point of view of the peasants involved. The government of President Belaúnde granted the peasants of La Convención legal title to the pieces of land on which the landlords had allowed them to have their homes and to grow crops for their own use. When a guerrilla group (this time not Trotskyist) sought to win the support of the La Convención peasants in 1965 they received no support.

Hugo Blanco remained in jail throughout the rest of the 1960s. He used his time to develop a particular approach to revolution in Peru which was substantially different

from the traditional Trotskyist position but was to significantly influence the conflict within USEC which began with its 1969 congress. Blanco laid particular stress on the importance of peasant unions in the Peruvian Revolution. He saw them as incipient soviets and urged that they reach out to undertake de facto government activities in their localities, such as providing health care, carrying out local public works projects, and developing extension services for their members. The local peasant unions should be joined in regional federations and a national confederation, which would serve as a kind of "alternative government" the Russian soviets had in 1917.

When the military government of General Velasco seized power late in 1968, the FIR expressed critical support for its efforts at agrarian reform and its initial hostility to foreign firms in the Peruvian economy.

Peruvian Trotskyism and the Velasco Military Regime

In the later years of the 1960s there existed three tendencies among the Peruvian Trotskyists: the Posadas Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), the dissident group which had broken away from the POR earlier in the decade and was headed by Ismael Frías; and the Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria affiliated with the United Secretariat. Each of these groups reacted differently towards the seizure of power by a group of reformist-oriented military men late in 1968.

The POR(T) gave enthusiastic support to the military government of General Juan Velasco Alvarado. This backing was shown in a mimeographed pamphlet the party issued about the regime's agrarian reform law. It proclaimed that "whatever are its limitations, conciliating and nondevelopment aspects, within the Plan of Development of the country, outside of the normal channels of capitalism, of private property, the new law of Agrarian Reform has a central base

which justifies and impels our support: THE LIQUIDATION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF PERU OF THE ECONOMIC, CENTRAL POLITICAL POWER OF CAPITALISM: THE OLIGARCHY."¹

The Peruvian Posadistas also expressed their support of the military regime in their fortnightly newspaper, *Voz Obrera*, the publication and distribution of which was one of the principal activities of the party. Thus, in the issue marking the second year of the military regime a manifesto of the POR(T) was published under the headline, "On this second anniversary of the revolutionary nationalist movement of the 3rd of October, we call for struggle in a united front of all of the masses of the country." The manifesto listed a number of demands, the first of which was: "For support of the progressive measures of the nationalist government: agrarian reform, press law, industries law, nationalization of petroleum."²

However, from time to time *Voz Obrera* lamented the failure of the military regime to develop a strong base of support among "the masses." In a front-page editorial in the issue of the first fortnight of May 1971, *Voz Obrera* wrote that we urge and call on the nationalist and revolutionary military men . . . "to learn the historical security and the capacity of the masses . . . as part of the defense of the Revolutionary State which includes the whole country."³ A month later, in commenting on a cabinet crisis of the Velasco regime, *Voz Obrera* proclaimed: "In order to get past this very contradictory stage and very large crisis, the nationalist movement needs the support of the masses."⁴

For the most part POR(T) received little attention from the daily press. However, in May 1972 the conservative paper *El Comercio* carried a long article about charges which had reportedly been made by the Ministry of Interior of the involvement of members of the POR(T) in counterfeiting foreign currency. From the context of the full-page exposition of the subject it would appear

that the article was designed mainly to attack Ismael Frías, since much attention was paid to his early participation in the party—without any notice that he had long ceased to belong to it.⁵

POR(T) survived into the 1980s. It was reported in February 1980 that it had joined the Leftist Revolutionary Alliance (ARI), formed behind the presidential candidacy of Hugo Blanco in that year's election.⁶

Ismael Frías took an even more friendly attitude towards the Velasco government than did POR(T). In 1965 he had organized the Liga Socialista Revolucionaria as a "national Marxist organization," no longer claiming association with International Trotskyism. It made its first public appearance in March 1969. Thereafter, the party had very limited activity, Frías and others becoming closely associated with the Velasco government. He was one of the principal leaders in trying to establish a kind of popular mobilization group for the regime, called the Sistema Nacional de Apoyo a la Movilización Social (SINAMOS). Frías professed to believe that the Velasco government was working toward the establishment of a peculiarly Peruvian type of Socialism.⁷

The Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria took a decidedly more critical position vis-à-vis the Velasco regime. On August 20, 1969, it issued a statement saying that "the junta's position—agrarian reform, the nationalization of Brea and Parinas, etc.—surprised the people and made the regime's 'revolutionary' demagoguery seem credible to broad sectors. Sections of the left as well, even so-called Trotskyist groups like the Liga Socialista Revolucionaria . . . and *Voz Obrera* are saying that the junta is revolutionary and nationalist. The orthodox Trotskyists of the FIR say that the junta is a bourgeois regime which wants to develop the country, but that it is not nationalist and still less revolutionary. From the beginning, we said that it was bonapartist . . ."⁸

One major reason for the critical attitude

of the FIR toward the military regime was undoubtedly the fact that for two years that regime continued to imprison the principal leader of the FIR, Hugo Blanco. He was not released until December 22, 1970.⁹ Blanco was again arrested four months later and was held for a short while.¹⁰ Subsequently, he was deported to Mexico by the Velasco regime.

Interviewed soon after arrival in Mexico, Hugo Blanco gave his assessment of the "revolutionary" Peruvian military regime: "We are struggling for socialism. It would be utopian to expect a bourgeois military regime to achieve it. We urged the masses to seize control of their own destiny. From this point of departure, we demonstrate to the masses that no matter how progressive the bourgeois laws might be they will inevitably serve the interests of the capitalists, not those of the workers."¹¹

Proliferation and Partial Reunification of Peruvian Trotskyism

During the first part of the 1970s the Peruvian Trotskyists split further into a number of quarreling factions. At least one of those originated from elements of the Peruvian far left which had not hitherto been Trotskyists; most of the rest resulted from splits within the Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria.

The first new group to appear was the Partido Obrero Marxista Revolucionario (PORM), which was established in 1971. It was organized and led by Ricardo Napuri, a one-time army officer who had spent ten years in Argentina, where he had had contact with Silvio Frondizi, an independent Marxist, and had been converted to Marxism. Returning to Peru, he had become active in the Fidelista-oriented Rebel Apra which later took the name Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR). However, he became disillusioned in Castroism and became a leader of what he later qualified as

the "centrist" Marxist organization Vanguardia Revolucionaria. Finally, in 1971, Napuri took the leadership in a split in Vanguardia Revolucionaria which resulted in establishment of PORM, as a Trotskyist organization.

In June 1972, Napuri described the activities of PORM: "We are working on the front of the sugar workers; among the proletariat working in factories or industries; among bank employees and fishermen; and on the mass fronts of the petit-bourgeoisie, especially among students. And, throughout the trade unions, we are trying to organize a union current that will be an alternative to the currents we regard as faltering or counterrevolutionary."

According to Napuri, PORM was not friendly disposed towards the Velasco regime: "What we have to do is explain the conditions under which a Marxist vanguard has to carry out its daily job, and relate to the masses, taking into account the fact that Velasco's nationalist, petit-bourgeois administration is a more enlightened government than the bourgeoisie could have provided, and that it possesses enormous power. . . . Since petit-bourgeois nationalism is the greatest obstacle to the advancement of proletarian and socialist trends, the struggle against this government and its resolutions must be a constant, relentless struggle. . . ."¹²

PORM suffered at least some persecution by the Velasco regime. Early in 1973 Ricardo Napuri was among several Trotskyists of various groups who were jailed by the regime.¹³

In 1973 PORM became the Peruvian affiliate of the Lambertist Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International [CORQI].¹⁴

At least half a dozen other factions appeared in the 1970s. Most of these emerged out of the Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria, affiliated with the United Secretariat, and the controversies which took place within USEC during the 1970s undoubtedly

played at least some role in the splits of the FIR. For instance, Hugo Blanco sided with the SWP of the United States in that controversy, opposing a general "guerrilla war" line for the Trotskyist movement in Latin America. He was joint author with Peter Camejo and Joseph Hansen of the SWP and Aníbal Lorenzo and Nahuel Moreno of the Argentine PST, of one of the major documents to emerge from that struggle, "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet," which was submitted to the International Executive Committee of USEC in December 1972.¹⁵

The different Trotskyist factions active in Peru during the 1970s included the Frente de la Izquierda Revolucionaria—Fourth International, FIR—Combate, the Grupo Combate Socialista, Círculos Natalia Sedova, Partido Socialista Internacionalista, and the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores. The last of these was led for a time by Hugo Blanco.¹⁶

Another group which existed in the 1970s and early 1980s was the Liga Comunista. This was associated with the International Committee of the Fourth International, headed by Gerry Healy of Great Britain. Two leaders of the group, Sergio Barrios and José Carlos Ballón, were jailed by the Velasco government in 1975.¹⁷

Although it clearly was one of the smallest groups in the Peruvian far left, the Healyite organization continued to exist through the 1970s and early 1980s. By 1982 it was called the Liga Obrera Socialista (LOS) and was publishing a weekly periodical, *Prensa Obrera*. At the time of the Argentine invasion of the Malvinas (Falkland Islands) the LOS was active in trying to mobilize the Peruvian workers behind the Argentines and to provoke worker boycotts of British trade with Peru.¹⁸

In 1976 efforts began to be made to unite at least those Trotskyist organizations which were associated with or had sympathy for the United Secretariat. In that year the Trotskyist Coordination Commission

was established, which was later transformed into the Unification Commission. Finally, in August 1978, the Organizing Commission for the Unified Party was established.¹⁹

Meanwhile, in November 1977 unity had been achieved between the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores and the Partido Socialista Internacionalista. They launched a new periodical, *La Verdad*, to take the place of the PST's *Palabra Socialista*, and the PST's *Obrero Internacionalista*. The first issue of the new periodical called for "unity of all the workers and peasants organizations, and of the socialist parties, to present united workers candidates and win the majority in the constituent assembly, forcing the government to resign."²⁰

Then on October 8, 1978, five different Trotskyist groups were united in the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party) which began publication of a new periodical, *Combate Socialista*, to take the place of another one, *Revolución* which the five groups involved had been publishing jointly for several months.

Four of the groups which joined to form the PRT were the Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria, the FIR-IV (FIR—Fourth International), the Grupo Combate Socialista, and the Círculos Natalia Sedova. In addition, a part of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST) led by Hugo Blanco joined the unification move. The new party sought recognition as the Peruvian section of the United Secretariat.²¹

The majority of the PST which had not joined in the establishment of the PRT and still remained a sympathizing organization of the United Secretariat merged about the same time with another fragment of the old FIR, the FIR—Partido de Obreros y Campesinos (FIR-POC). This merged group continued to use the PST's name, and published a newspaper, *Bandera Socialista*, which had been the name of the FIR-POC's paper.²²

The PST, as it remained after the defection

of the Hugo Blanco faction, was the Peruvian affiliate of the Bolshevik Tendency (BT) in the United Secretariat, headed by the Argentine Nahuel Moreno. The PST left the United Secretariat with the BT late in 1979. When the Bolshevik Tendency and the Lambertist CORQI took steps towards fusion in 1979-80, their respective Peruvian affiliates, the PST and the POMR, also began negotiations concerning unification. However, when the two international groups broke apart again late in 1981 negotiations in Peru ended, although not before there was a certain realignment of forces between the two groups.

The split in the Fourth International (International Committee) which had been set up by the Moreno and Lambert factions of International Trotskyism, provoked a controversy within the Lambertist group in Peru, the POMR. The founder and longtime general secretary of the POMR, Ricardo Napuri, favored continuation of negotiations for unity with the Morenoist Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores. However, a majority of the leadership opposed the continuation of negotiations. In November 1981 Napuri resigned from POMR. A substantial portion of the POMR membership supported Napuri, and the party was split.²³ Subsequently, the Napuri faction of POMR did merge with the PST, and the merged group ultimately used the name Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores. It was the Peruvian section of the International Workers League (Fourth International), founded in January 1982.

Mass and Parliamentary Activity of Peruvian Trotskyists

By the late 1970s the various Trotskyist groups in Peru had developed an appreciable amount of influence in the labor and peasant movements. They also participated in the 1978 and 1980 elections and for the first time succeeded in electing members of both the 1978 constitutional convention and the regular parliament. In 1983 they again par-

ticipated in elections for municipal posts, with some degree of success.

In the 1970s and early 1980s there were four principal groups of Peruvian unions. The oldest was the Confederación de Trabajadores del Perú (CTP), established in the 1940s and controlled in the 1970s and 1980s by the Partido Aprista Peruano, a party associated with the Socialist International. The second was the Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (CGTP), founded shortly after the 1968 military coup by the pro-Moscow Communist Party and at first favored by the military regime. Third was the Confederación de Trabajadores Revolucionarios del Perú (CTRP), established under the aegis of the Velasco regime. Finally, there was a substantial group of independent unions including particularly the Miners and Metal Workers Union and the Teachers Union.

Generally, the Trotskyists did not try to work within the Apristas CTP or the government's CTRP. They at first sought to act particularly within the Communists' confederation, but also were very active among the members of the independent unions.²⁴

Although the Peruvian Trotskyists did not come to national leadership in any major labor organization, they had significant following on a local level in a number of important unions. It was reported in 1983 that they had elected officials among the miners, bank workers, metal workers, building trades, teachers, and fishermen, as well as in local neighborhood groups and in the universities.²⁵

The PRT had at least some influence in the country's largest peasant organization, the Confederación Campesina del Perú (CCP). Thus, at the congress of that group in July 1982, Hugo Blanco was reelected to the national executive committee of that group, and was named as Secretary of Human Rights of the organization. It was reported by the United Secretariat that "in that Congress, the PRT had, for the first time, a political role in this Confederación, with the pre-

sentation of documents and the participation of peasant militants of the PRT in the debates and commissions."²⁶

The various Trotskyist groups were active in the electoral field. Three elections were of particular importance, those of a constituent assembly in 1978, for president and a regular congress in 1980, and for municipal offices in 1983.

In each of these elections, some of the Trotskyist groups participated in coalitions. In 1978 there were two such alliances of the Peruvian far left. One was the Union Democrática Popular (UDP) which included Maoist parties, as well as two Trotskyist groups—the FIR—Fourth International and the FIR—Combate. It had as its electoral slogan "a revolutionary people's government."²⁷

The other far left coalition was the Frente Obrero Campesino Estudiantil del Perú (FOCEP). It was described by *Intercontinental Press* as being "based on three Peruvian Trotskyist organizations, Blanco's party, the PST the FIR-POC and the POMR. It also includes a number of trade union, peasant, student and shantytown dwellers' organizations, as well as independent socialists. . . ." ²⁸ The FOCEP came in third in the election, getting 12 percent of the total vote. ²⁹ Among the Trotskyists elected to the constituent assembly were Hugo Blanco and Enrique Fernández of the PST, and Ricardo Napuri, Magda Benavides and Hernán Cuentas of the POMR. ³⁰

During this campaign the Trotskyists professed not to have any faith in the constituent assembly. In an electoral proclamation, the PST said that "if we are participating in the elections despite knowing that they are a farce, it is precisely in order to use them in the service of the mass struggle and the building of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores. . . . In electoral periods the masses have their attention focused not only on their particular sectoral interests, but also on general political problems. . . . Thus now is the best time to talk about our political program. . . ." ³¹

When the constituent assembly finally met the Trotskyist deputies joined in presenting what came to be known as "the red motion" to the body. This resolution proclaimed: "The Constitutional Assembly assumes all legislative and executive powers of the nation to apply an emergency plan based essentially on full exercise of democratic liberties, reemployment of discharged workers, urgent measures to resolve the economic crisis based on nonpayment of the foreign debt, general increase of wages, and grant of land free of cost to the peasants."³² Needless to say, this resolution was not passed, and the government of General Morales Bermúdez remained in power until after the 1980 elections held under the constitution written by the assembly.

In the 1980 elections the Trotskyist groups which had participated in the FOCEP tried to keep together that coalition. When that failed they sought to mount another coalition including some non-Trotskyist groups. Finally, however, the campaign was waged by a joint slate state of the three major Trotskyist groups: PRT, PST, and POMR.

FOCEP broke up when it was abandoned by some of the non-Trotskyist groups and individuals who had originally belonged to it. That element, headed by Bernardo Ledesma, first joined a coalition named Left Unity (*UI*) with the pre-Moscow Communists and the Revolutionary Socialist Party of ex-General Leonidas Rodríguez.

The Trotskyists then organized the Revolutionary Left Alliance (ARI), which was composed of "a wide range of Trotskyist, centrist, and Maoist forces, and was backed by unions and other mass organizations." It put forward Hugo Blanco as its presidential candidate, under the slogan, "For a worker government—without bosses or generals." However, the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST) stayed out of the ARI coalition. Shortly before the deadline for filing candidacies for the May 1980 election, ARI fell completely apart. As a consequence, the PRT continued the campaign of Hugo Blanco

on its own, and was backed by the other two Trotskyist groups, the PST and POMR, both of which were given spots on the PRT ticket for members of the senate and chamber of deputies.³³

Hugo Blanco came in fourth among fifteen presidential candidates. He received 160,173 votes, compared to 1,870,874 cast for the winner, ex-President Fernando Belaúnde Terry. The Trotskyist ticket won two members of the Senate and three in the Chamber of Deputies.³⁴ A Trotskyist source noted that although the vote was substantially lower than two years before, "Hugo Blanco and the PRT outran all other left parties in the Lima metropolitan area and in much of southern Peru. In Moquegua Province, a stronghold of the militant copper miners union, the Trotskyists received 18 percent of the vote, and in Tacna Province . . . the PRT received 15 percent."³⁵

The handful of Trotskyist senators and deputies could hardly play a decisive role in the national parliament, but from time to time they, and particularly Hugo Blanco, provoked strong reactions inside congress and outside of it. Thus, in August 1983 Blanco was suspended from his seat until the end of its current session in December "for having used the parliamentary rostrum to accuse General Clemente Noel, military chief of the Ayacucho region, of murder."³⁶

During the 1983 municipal elections three main groups faced one another: the forces backing President Belaúnde (his Acción Popular and the Partido Popular Cristiano); the Aprista Party; and a leftist alliance, the United Left. The Trotskyist parties had to decide whether to support the United Left, particularly in Lima where it was strongest, or to go it alone.

The United Left was "composed essentially of the Peruvian Communist Party, the Peruvian Democratic Union (UPD), the PCR (Maoists), the UNIR (Maoists), the PSR (party of General Leonidas Rodríguez)."³⁷ It won in Lima, although the Aprista Party won the elections in most of the rest of the country.

The PST, affiliated with the Moreno current of International Trotskyism "decided to give critical support to the United Left candidates" in the municipal elections in Lima. "They called on people to vote for the United Left but they issued systematic and public criticisms of the leadership of the United Left and its program."³⁸ Subsequent to the election the PST newspaper *Bandera Socialista* proposed the formation of "a government of the IU and the CGTP as an alternative to the present government and to APRA and other employer variants."³⁹

In some cities outside of the national capital the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores ran its own candidates. They elected mayors in the city of Tarapoto and in the mining town of Cujones, as well as electing a number of municipal councilmen.⁴⁰

In the general election of 1985 the PST ran Ricardo Napuri as its candidate for president. With him it nominated Magda Benavides, a bank union leader, for first vice president and Enrique Fernández, described as a "metal worker leader" for second vice president.⁴¹ The PST ticket received only a very small percentage of the total vote, which tended to be polarized between the nominees of the Aprista Party and the United Left.

There is no information available concerning the position of the Lambertist POMR in the December 1983 municipal elections. However, it attacked the United Left as a "popular front" and four months after the elections it participated in a conference "of trade union and political leaders" who established a "provisional political coordinating committee" the objective of which was "to structure a class movement oriented towards formation of a workers party independent of the bourgeoisie."⁴²

The United Secretariat's PRT ran its own lists of candidates in Lima in the December 1983 municipal poll. The results were disastrous and provoked a new split in the organization. One unfriendly source noted that "As a result, they were almost wiped off the electoral map. They were accused of being

divisive and sectarian since the overwhelming majority of the masses decided to vote for the United Left and rejected any kinds of divisions within the left."⁴³

The PRT election defeat provoked an intense "self-criticism" in the party, which dealt not only with the party's policy in the 1983 election, but with the line it had followed ever since its establishment in 1978. This document read in part: "We think that our error is not only in the fact of not having retired our candidates to give critical support to the IU. We feel that this error has been more important and more profound. Practically since its foundation, our party has followed a dogmatic and sectarian line, steadily juxtaposing the defense of revolutionary positions and the construction of the party to the practice of the united front. . . ."

The document then "recognized the error" of not having joined the United Left when it was first established "as the united cadre of the left." It then said that "the IU is the core of the united front of the workers and the Peruvian people. . . . Affirming this, our party publicly pledges to work unitedly and loyally in that core and to push forward its rank and file committees."⁴⁴

This "self-criticism" and the subsequent request of the PRT to enter the United Left (with the apparent support of the United Secretariat) provoked violent internal controversy. This struggle culminated in March 1984 in a split, when two separate "congresses of the PRT" were held by those supporting the self-criticism on the one hand, led by Hugo Blanco, and those opposed to the change in line, on the other.⁴⁵

Trotskyites and the Sendero Luminoso

A new phenomenon on the Peruvian far left which appeared in the early 1980s was the so-called "Sendero Luminoso," officially the Partido Comunista del Perú-Sendero Luminoso (Communist Party of Peru-Shin-

ing Path). An offshoot of the original Maoist party of Peru, this group, composed largely of students and professionals, established guerrilla bases in central Peru, particularly in the vicinity of Ayacucho. Although professing to represent the Indian peasants, it often tyrannized over and terrorized peasants under its control.

Hugo Blanco defined the attitude of the USEC Trotskyists toward the Sendero Luminoso in an interview in early 1984:

We consider Sendero to be revolutionaries, even though we do not agree with their methods. We try to defend their rights. Of course, we understand that the people will have to respond to violence with violence. But this must be the product of mass consciousness, not of paternalistic actions by a group that appoints itself the representative of all the peasants. . . .

The peasants themselves must decide what they must or must not do. It is up to the people in any given sector to make that decision. That is why we so deeply disagree with Sendero's methods. Some sectors of the left are sympathetic to Sendero but critical of certain nonessential aspects of its methods. This attitude flows from frustration with the generally reformist course the left has taken and its inability to project an alternative. . . .⁴⁶

Polish Trotskyism

A small Trotskyist movement existed in Poland during the 1930s. Its ranks were drawn principally from Jewish former members of the Communist Party and it did not survive Nazi invasion of World War II and the subsequent subjugation of the country by the Stalinists. Perhaps the most important fact about Polish Trotskyism, from a historical point of view, is that one of its leaders was Isaac Deutscher, who after World War II wrote the classic three-volume biography of Leon Trotsky.

Polish Communists and Trotsky in the 1920s

Some of the leaders of the Polish Communist Party of the 1920s had had more or less close associations with Trotsky before the 1917 revolutions. Thus, Stanislaw Lapinski, at the time a leader of the Left Polish Socialist Party, worked with Trotsky in 1915-16 in Paris, where they jointly edited an anti-war newspaper, *Rushe Slovo*.¹

The Polish Communist Party was one of the national groups outside of the Soviet Union in which Trotsky received strongest support in the early phases of the struggles within the CPSU in the 1920s. As early as December 1923, even before the death of Lenin, the Central Committee of the Polish Party sent a letter to the Soviet Party through Comintern channels protesting against increasingly violent attacks on Trotsky already being made by the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev "first troika": "For our Party, for the whole Communist International, for all the world proletarian revolution, the name of Comrade Trotsky is associated in an indissoluble fashion with the victory of the Soviet Revolution, with the Red Army, with communism . . . We refuse

to admit the possibility that Comrade Trotsky could be excluded from the ranks of the Russian Communist Party and the Communist International." The Polish CP reiterated its support for Trotsky after Lenin's death: "After the death of Lenin, there is need for such a man. . . . The eyes of the masses are turning to Trotsky."²

A few months later, when Zinoviev gave his opening presidential address to the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, he announced that a special commission of the congress would be established to look into the state of the Polish party. It was headed by Stalin himself, and the vice chairman of the commission was Molotov, Stalin's most indefatigable assistant. Most other members of the commission were Poles opposed to the then current party leadership. In his report on the work of the commission, Stalin commented (in a prescient manner) that the Polish CP leaders "wish a combat in which there are no victims. . . . History knows no struggles without victims."³

René Dazy has noted that as a consequence of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern the Polish party leadership was "rigorously purged." However, after the successors to the "three Ws" who had dominated the party until then—Adolf Warski, Wera Kostrzewa, and Maximilien Waleki—themselves showed recalcitrance to Comintern dictation they were ousted in turn, and the three Ws were restored to the Polish leadership by the Comintern.⁴

They were still in charge at the time of the coup d'état of Marshal Joseph Pilsudski in May 1926, which overthrew the parliamentary regime which had existed since the establishment of the Polish Republic in 1919. The first reaction of the Communist leadership was to support Pilsudski's coup, although they quickly changed their minds and denounced Pilsudski as "aspiring to a dictatorship."⁵

These events resulted in the Comintern's organizing a special subcommission in July 1926, to investigate the behavior of the Pol-

ish Party leadership. Trotsky was still on the ECCI and was granted ten minutes to speak on the issue. In that speech Trotsky defined the Pilsudski regime as "fascist" and accused the three Ws of having been swept up by the petty bourgeois support for Pilsudski when they first supported the coup. He also denounced the Comintern's frequent changes in the leadership of the Polish party. There is no indication that he remembered the support the three Ws had given him in the first phases of his struggle with Stalin.⁶

In spite of the growing Stalinization of the Comintern and of the Polish Communist Party, there continued to exist within the Polish party some lingering sympathy for Trotsky. M. K. Dziewanowski has noted that "the defeated leader's pronouncement had a certain grandeur and brilliance which made his teachings attractive to the intellectual strata of the movement. Criticism of Comintern strategy and daily practice also appealed to Polish members because Stalin's hand had weighed heavily on the CPP. . . . Consequently, pro-Trotsky sympathies were still lingering by the late twenties. From time to time these sentiments would find some outlet in the party press and internal debates, but in each case the leadership managed to keep the statements within bounds. . . ."⁷

Emergence and Development of Polish Trotskyism

It was 1930 before an opposition began to take shape within the Polish Communist Party. According to Dziewanowski, "The platform of the opposition was broadly formulated in order to unite all its heterogeneous elements, which included some sympathizers of Trotsky, Brandler, and Bukharin. Isaac Deutscher, Pawel Minc, and Abe Flug were among the most active leaders of this revolt."⁸ The new opposition appealed to the Comintern for support against the authoritarian rule of the dominant faction led by Lenski (Julian Leszczyński), but

they judiciously refused an invitation to go to Moscow to discuss the issue.

Within the opposition a group more clearly aligned with Trotsky and his ideas began to emerge. This was due at least in part to the fact that Trotsky's ideas began to circulate fairly widely in Polish Communist circles via the *Bulletin of the Opposition* and several of Trotsky's pamphlets, particularly those dealing with the problem of the rise of Naziism in Germany.⁹

The break of the Trotsky sympathizers within the Polish Communist Party came in 1932. Early in 1932 Isaac Deutscher published an article entitled "The Danger of Barbarism Over Europe" in a Yiddish-language periodical, *Litvarishe Tribune*, which was closely associated with the Communist Party. Writing under the pseudonym Krakowski he argued that "the Marxist sector of the German workers in the present correlation of forces in the country is not capable by itself of repelling the offensive of Hitlerite barbarism." Similarly, the Social Democratic Party "is at the present moment interested in the struggle against Hitlerism," but "is not capable of conducting that struggle independently." Therefore, Deutscher concluded, the German Communists and Social Democrats should join forces to confront the Nazi menace.¹⁰

M. K. Dziewanowski has described what happened next: "This reasoning was then in flagrant contradiction to the party's, and parallel to that of Trotsky. The author was asked to admit that he had committed a breach of discipline, but was not yet required to renounce his views. Deutscher, however, bluntly refused to comply. A group of other Polish party members declared their solidarity with Deutscher, and they were all expelled as agents of 'social-fascism' at the Sixth Party Congress in 1932."¹¹

Soon after emergence of the Polish Left Opposition Trotsky sent them a "greeting" dated August 31, 1932. In this document he discussed the reasons why, in spite of the tradition of Rosa Luxemburg in the Polish

party, it had taken so long for an opposition to appear. He observed that "the explanation for this fact has its roots to a large extent in the extremely difficult conditions in which the Polish Communist Party has been placed, fighting under illegal conditions and at the same time under the direct observation of the Stalinist general staff. Thus Polish Bolshevik-Leninists must operate in an atmosphere of double illegality: one flows from Pilsudski, the other . . . from Stalin. . . ."¹²

The Left Opposition, which took the name Bolshevik-Leninists, included a few old-time leaders. The most significant of these was Hersz-Mendl Sztokfisz (Stockfisch). He had begun his political career as an anarchist but subsequently had joined the Jewish Labor Bund. He had participated in the Russian Revolution of 1905, and had known Trotsky as early as 1914. After years of exile in Paris he returned to Russia after the first revolution in 1917 and participated in the Bolshevik Revolution. He had joined the Red Army and became a member of the Bolshevik Party in 1919. Returning to Poland, Stockfisch became a member of the Polish Communists' revolutionary military committee in 1920 and was in charge of preparations for an armed insurrection in Warsaw.¹³ He was arrested and was sentenced to death, "miraculously" escaping execution.¹⁴ Stockfisch escaped to the Soviet Union where he worked with the Communist International. Returning to Poland at the end of the 1920s, he soon afterward became one of the organizers of the Left Opposition.¹⁵

Most of the leaders and members of the Left Opposition were younger people, however. They included Isaac Deutscher, Solomon Ehrlich, and Stefan Lamed. Ehrlich has been called the "moving spirit" of the group. Although born in Poland, he had emigrated for a number of years to Palestine, and joined the Communist Party there. Then he went to Switzerland to study in Zürich, and there he was won over to Trotsky's ideas by read-

ing some of his writings. As a member of the Marxist Student Group he recruited to Trotskyism Walter Nelz, and together they founded the first Opposition group in Switzerland in 1931. However, in the following year, the death of his father brought Ehrlich to return to Poland, where he got in touch with Stockfisch and other Polish oppositionists, including Isaac Deutscher.¹⁶

The Polish Left Opposition soon entered into contact with Trotsky and the International Secretariat. The first person to do so was Solomon Ehrlich. Subsequently, Hersz-Mendl Sztokfisz visited Paris and had an interview with Trotsky. During that meeting Stockfisch and Trotsky had a long discussion, among other things, about whether the Polish regime of Marshal Josef Pilsudski was "Bonapartist" or fascist. Stockfisch apparently took the position that one could not correctly qualify the Pilsudski government as being fascist, as Trotsky had done.¹⁷

Polish Trotskyism and the French Turn

One of the principal issues which caused controversy within Polish Trotskyism during its short history was that of the French Turn. It caused considerable discussion within the Polish group, and some between some of its leaders and Trotsky and the International Secretariat.

The Polish Trotskyists were at first resistant to Trotsky's suggestion that they enter the Polish Socialist parties. Pierre Broué has described their attitude as being "divided between hostility and reticence." He added that "The discussion is long and sharp; it ends, without scission, at the beginning of 1934 with approval of the Turn and of the orientation towards the IV International, a conclusion which was formalized by the affiliation, until then suspended, with the I.C.I. . . ."¹⁸

Since the great majority of the Polish Trotskyists were Jewish and Yiddish-speaking, they joined the Bund, the anti-Zionist

Yiddish-speaking Jewish organization which was the largest party among the Polish Jewish proletariat. However, some of the Trotskyists who had a Polish education went into the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), the country's largest Socialist party. The Trotskyists were offered a seat on the Warsaw Regional Committee of the PPS, and Stefan Lamed was designated by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik-Leninists to take that seat.

The Polish Trotskyists were not able to put out a regular periodical. Their attempt to publish a legal newspaper was suppressed by the police. They did put out some pamphlets, including one on the Moscow Trials written by Isaac Deutscher, which was published with the help of the PPS.¹⁹

Once the Polish Trotskyists had undertaken the entrism policy, on at least two occasions Trotsky offered them advice. In one letter, dated July 16, 1935, he urged them to concentrate particularly on relations with the supposed left-wing elements within the Polish Socialist Party, foreseeing a split in that organization and predicting that if the Polish regime were to outlaw the PPS, "only the revolutionary elements of the old party would survive in illegality."²⁰

In another letter, five months later, he suggested that because of the long traditions of the PPS and the Bund the Trotskyist elements "could not exert influence by discussions, articles, etc." Rather, he suggested that they concentrate on the youth of the two groups, organizing study sessions "on the history of the October Revolution, on that of Bolshevism, the Communist International [particularly the last twelve years], on the victory of Hitler in Germany, on the situation in France, etc." He added that "our people certainly enjoy great superiority over the members of the PPS and of the Bund, in accomplishing systematic work of education, of molding intellectually the youths in our spirit without running directly the risk of being accused of fractional activity."²¹

Although the Polish Trotskyists entered

the Socialist parties, they also maintained their own organization. Their Central Committee continued to function, and the enforcement of discipline within the group was largely a matter of ideological conviction and personal relations. Of course, the complete illegality of their organization also tended to discourage dissidence within it.

This does not mean that there were not polemical discussions within the group. There were at least three subjects in addition to entrism which were vigorously debated: whether the Pilsudski regime and its successors were fascist, whether the Polish Trotskyists should declare themselves a party, and whether they should support the immediate proclamation of the Fourth International.

Although the Trotskyists were not a significant element in the leadership of the trade union movement, they did have some influence in a few local unions, almost all of them groups of Jewish workers. The Communists also had very little trade union support in this period, the labor movement being largely dominated by the Socialist parties.

The Trotskyists remained a quite small group. It was reported at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International that the Polish group had about 350 members which Stefan Lamed has reported to be approximately correct, adding that with sympathizers they perhaps had a thousand people.²²

Polish Trotskyists at Fourth International Founding Conference

The Polish Trotskyists had two delegates at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International, Hersz-Mendl Sztokfisz and Stefan Lamed. Both men were members of the Central Committee of the Polish Bolshevik-Leninists, were refugees from the Polish military regime, and were then living in Paris. The Polish group could not have afforded to send people all the way from Warsaw specifically to attend the meeting.

Sztokfisz and Lamed had arrived in Paris in March 1938, and had entered into contact with Rudolf Klement, who was making the plans for the conference but was assassinated by Stalinist agents before it was held.²³

The Poles played an active and rather dissident role in the Founding Conference. They objected to the passage in the Transitional Program adopted by the conference which claimed that strikes which resulted in workers occupying factories had revolutionary significance. Sztokfisz argued that in Poland such strikes had on various occasions been expressions of workers' desperation rather than of their revolutionary ardor;²⁴ however, their proposal to amend the Program was defeated with only the two Polish delegates voting for it.²⁵

The Polish delegates, however, strongly supported Trotsky's position and that of the majority of the delegates to the conference insofar as the characterization of the Soviet Union as still being a workers state was concerned. Sztokfisz labelled Yvan Craipeau's proposed amendment to the Transition Program, which would have claimed that a new ruling class had emerged in the USSR, as "non-Marxist."²⁶

The most important opposition position taken by the Poles was their objection to the formal proclamation of the Fourth International. Both delegates argued that the three previous internationals had all been proclaimed in periods when the workers and revolutionary movements were on the upswing, and their establishment had thrown terror into the capitalist ruling class. In contrast, in 1938 there was a conservative and reactionary trend which would mean that the proclamation of a new revolutionary international would have little impact. This was particularly the case, they argued, because of the exceedingly small size of the groups and parties making up the International. Unlike each of its three predecessors, the Fourth International had no major national working-class or revolutionary group associated with it. However, their opposi-

tion was overridden, with only the two Poles and Yvan Craipeau voting against the immediate establishment of the Fourth International.²⁷ The Polish delegates made it clear that their opposition to the proclamation of the international did not mean any disloyalty to the movement. They announced after the vote that they would "respect loyally the discipline of the IVth International and apply as best they could the decisions of the world congress."²⁸

The Founding Conference had a special Polish Commission. Two proposed resolutions were submitted to the Commission.²⁹ The motion which was finally adopted urged the Polish Trotskyists to take advantage of the fact that the Comintern had just dissolved the Polish Communist Party. To that end it urged withdrawal of the Trotskyists from activity within the Bund, the formation of an "independent" organization, and "elaboration of a political platform including the slogans and tasks which the Polish Bolshevik Leninists propose in their country."³⁰

Demise of Polish Trotskyism

The Second World War destroyed Polish Trotskyism. Stefan Lamed has written: "The movement was physically wiped out by the Nazis. I also know of some victims of the Soviet occupation. There was no exile movement to speak of. A few individuals, like myself, survived because, tracked by the police, we had to flee the country."³¹

Reiner Tosstorff has brought to our attention the fact that a Trotskyist group functioned in the Warsaw ghetto before the uprising in which the ghetto was wiped out. He has written: "I came recently across the Trotskyist group in the Warsaw ghetto. . . . The group published two journals between 1940 and 1941 in Polish: *Czerwony sztandar* [Red Flag] and *Przeglad Marksistowski* [Marxist Tribune]."³² There is no indication that any of the members of that group survived the war.

With the development of the opposition movement within Stalinist Poland in the 1960s and thereafter, the international Trotskyist movement generally expressed great sympathy with the dissidents. Although they particularly indicated backing for the dissident intellectual group KOR, and professed to see similarities between its position and that of International Trotskyism, there is no indication that the KOR people considered themselves Trotskyists or that they were in direct contact with any branch of International Trotskyism.

The only avowedly Trotskyist group was established among exiles on the initiative of the Hungarian Trotskyist Balasz Nagy (Varga). This was the Revolutionary Labor League of Poland, which in the early 1980s was said to be affiliated with Varga's splinter group known simply as The Fourth International.³³

The Vargaites claimed that some of their people had been involved in Solidarity, including "a trade union leader elected in a mining firm with more than 1,000 workers." With regard to imprisoned solidarity militants, in July 1984 the Vargaites' Spanish periodical reported: "Among the workers, there are the Trotskyists, militants of our Polish section (LORP). Although they are few and in spite of the extremely hard conditions of their detention, for instance in one of the hardest prisons of the country, in Strzelce Opolski, they have shown all their energy not only to defend the other workers, the ideals of the free union Solidarnosc, but to propagate the ideas and program of the IV International."³⁴

Another group which appeared during this same period has also been labelled Trotskyist by the British dissident Socialist Organizer group. This was the Polish Socialist Party of Labor, organized by Edmund Baluka, who had been a leader of the Szczecin shipyard workers' strikes in 1970-71. He was put on trial by the Jaruzelski regime in 1983.³⁵

The United Secretariat does not appear to

have developed any Polish group during the Solidarity period. In October 1981 it began to publish a Polish version of *Inprecor* called *Inprekor*, which appeared every two months for some years thereafter. Among other things, it carried articles by several of the intellectuals associated with Solidarity, including Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik.³⁶

Trotskyism in Portugal

Trotskyism first appeared in Portugal in the final phase of the corporative state dictatorship which had been established by Antonio Salazar in the late 1920s and continued under his successor Marcelo Caetano, and which was finally overthrown by a military coup on April 25, 1974. The appearance of Trotskyism was an indirect consequence of the student unrest of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In the late 1960s student associations were established at Lisbon and Coimbra universities and in some high schools. Hernando dos Santos, a leader of the *Aliança Socialista da Juventude* after the anti-Caetano coup, said in an interview in mid-1975 that "It was out of the student movement that most of the left-wing groups grew, including the Trotskyist organizations. The Trotskyist movement played a very important role in organizing the student movement—especially in the secondary schools in Lisbon. They initiated the student associations and the student newspapers in the schools."¹

With the overthrow of Caetano began a period of about a year and a half which the Trotskyists of Portugal and outside of the country agreed was "prerevolutionary." There were several key events during this period.

The dominant political element after April 1974 was the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), composed of those military officers who had carried out the overthrow of the Caetano regime and who provided the presidents, prime ministers, and other key officials of the various "provisional" governments which came thereafter.

There were two attempts by more conservative-minded officers to overthrow the revolutionary regime during the period under consideration, those of September 1974 and

March 1975. Both were defeated. In April 1975 elections for a constituent assembly were held, and it met for a year or more after that, establishing the framework for a new regime to succeed the fascistic Salazar-Caetano dictatorship.

During the first fifteen months or more of the revolutionary regime the MFA worked most closely with the Communist Party, which at the time of the fall of the Caetano regime had the best-organized cadre of all groups which had opposed the dictatorship. As a result of this close collaboration, the Communists came to control most of the country's newspapers as well as the new labor movement which came into existence after the overthrow of Caetano. A Trade Union Unity Law passed early in 1975 "froze CP control of the union structure."²

In the April 1975 elections it was the Socialist Party which received the overwhelmingly largest vote, 37 percent. The Communists got only about a third of what the Socialists received. But before the election both Socialists and Communists had signed an agreement with the MFA which guaranteed that the MFA would continue as the dominant element in the government regardless of who would win the election, at least until the completion of the new constitution.

After the April election the Communists continued to have the inside track with the MFA-dominated government. This was shown in July 1975 when a group of Communist-led printers seized control of *República*, one of the few Socialist Party dailies in Lisbon, and refused to allow the Socialist editors to determine the policy of the paper or even enter the premises. Soldiers were sent to assure control of the paper by the Communist-led printers.

The Socialists organized massive demonstrations in which hundreds of thousands of workers participated to protest the seizure of their paper. They finally withdrew from the fifth provisional government which was then in power. In August 1975 there was a

new shakeup in the MFA and in the government, in which officers more allied with the Socialists than with the Communists came out ahead. As a consequence the Socialists joined the new sixth provisional government and the Communists had a very secondary role in it.

Finally, on November 25–26 1975 a new crisis developed. The government dismissed General Otelo de Carvalho, a close CP sympathizer, as commander of the Lisbon garrison. As a consequence, military elements sympathetic with the Communists and apparently in concert with them attempted to seize power, taking over military airbases around Lisbon, seizing radio stations and other places. When there was a strong reaction from military forces loyal to the government, the Communists quickly shifted their position, withdrawing their support from the attempted coup. Thereafter, although the Communists remained in the government for some time, there was no longer any possibility that they could seize power in alliance with friendly military men.³

It was against the background of these events that the Trotskyist movement had its baptism of fire in Portugal. From its inception it was a divided movement. At least three different factions of the international Trotskyist movement had affiliates or groups sympathetic to them in this early period.

The Emergence of Trotskyist Parties

At the time of the fall of the Caetano dictatorship, in April 1974, there existed two groups in Portugal which declared their loyalty to International Trotskyism. One was the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI), which had already contacted the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and had been accepted as a sympathizing organization at the February 1974 congress of USEC. The other organization, the Partido Revolucionario dos Trabalhadores (PRT) was apparently not known to the international

movement at the time of its February 1974 meeting.

About these two organizations, Gerry Foley, Joseph Hansen, and George Novack wrote in October 1975: "Both groups began as very small nuclei in the underground struggle against the Caetano dictatorship. They have played an active role in the ongoing revolutionary events in Portugal. As a consequence, despite some errors, they have recruited and become recognized as a distinctive revolutionary current. In our opinion, the two groups would gain considerably by uniting their forces on a principled basis."⁴

What Foley, Hansen, and Novack did not specifically indicate was that the two Portuguese organizations were aligned with different factions in the struggle then underway within the United Secretariat. The LCI was associated with the "Majority Tendency" centered on Mandel, Frank, and Maitan, the PRT was more or less aligned with the USEC faction organized around the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

During at least the first year and a half after the overthrow of Caetano, a third Portuguese group had contact and more or less close association with another faction of International Trotskyism, that is, the International Socialists (IS). The group with which the IS tendency formed links was the Partido Revolucionario do Proletariado/Brigadas Revolucionarias (PRP-BR, or more usually referred to as PRP). The PRP has been described as "An armed guerrilla force against Caetano formed from a split with the PCP in 1971. PRP formed as a political wing . . . in September 1973. Led by Senhora Isabel do Carmo its politics have a mix of the Guevara and classical Left Communism of the '20s."⁵

Relationships of the international tendencies with their counterpart groups in Portugal served to stimulate factionalism on an international level. Strong divergences within USEC over Portuguese issues considerably intensified the existing schism within that body. Emerging differences of

opinion over Portugal were a major factor in a split between the British and United States members of the International Socialist Tendency.

The USEC Parties

The two groups associated with USEC cooperated on a number of occasions. In April 1975 both groups participated in a public debate in which the Socialist Party was also represented. This meeting was sponsored by the Aliança Socialista da Juventude (ASJ), the youth group of the PRT. Gerry Foley of the SWP reported that at this meeting the representative of the LCI Bernardo de Souza, explained that the ASJ and PRT "were united with the LCI in their support of the Fourth International and, as Trotskyists, represented the revolutionary traditions of the workers movement and May Day."⁶

Both groups participated in the resistance against the March 1975 coup attempt by right-wing military officers. It was reported in *Intercontinental Press* that the Liga Comunista Internacionalista

... issued a leaflet on the day of the attempted coup. ... It called for the formation of armed workers pickets in the factories, for assemblies of soldiers and sailors to remove reactionary officers and work with the elected workers commissions, for the expropriation and public trial of all capitalists implicated in the coup, and for the immediate dissolution of the repressive security police and the Republican National Guard, sections of which had participated in the coup attempt. The PRT ... ran off a new issue of its fortnightly newspaper *Combate Socialista*. ... The newspaper's demands, featured on the front page, were similar to those of the LCI. ...

The Trotskyists were the only ones to put forward a program of concrete demands. ... The Maoists, for example, simply talked about "unity of the peo-

ple," that sort of thing. The reformists of the Socialist Party and the CP emphasized support to the Armed Forces Movement.⁷

The PRT supported the candidates of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista in the April 1975 election for a constituent assembly.⁸ During the campaign the LCI called for formation of a "workers government." One of its leaders, Adelino Fortunato, elaborated on this call: "We are opposed to the capitalist Ministers remaining in the government. ... We propose a workers government in which all the organizations of the working class would be represented (the rural associations, factory associations, unions, etc.) in order to offer a real guarantee that the interests of the masses will be upheld. ..."⁹

The LCI was the only one of the twelve legally recognized parties participating in the April 1975 election which refused to sign a "pact-platform" to be included in the new constitution by the yet-to-be elected constitutional assembly presented to them by the MFA. The essence of this document was stated by the official spokesman for the MFA: "It is obvious ... that we are not prepared to yield on the essential points, one of which is institutionalization of the MFA." Although the LCI attended the meeting of party representatives with the MFA at which the pact-platform was adopted, they refused to accept the document. Subsequently, in their election meetings they expressed their opposition to the deal which the other parties had agreed to with the military leaders.¹⁰

In the months following the April 1975 election, serious divergences developed between the positions of the LCI and the PRT as well as between their respective backers within the United Secretariat. One issue over which this split developed was the deprivation of the Socialist Party of control of the newspaper *Republica* by the papers' printers under leadership of Communists and their allies in June 1975—a move supported by the military. The LCI not only

supported this action but cooperated with moves to prevent demonstrations of the Socialists in Lisbon against seizure of their paper. There they joined with Communists and some extreme leftists in building barricades across streets down which the Socialist demonstrators were scheduled to march. In Oporto and other cities the LCI participated alongside the Communists in counter-demonstrations against those organized by the Socialists.¹¹

The actions of the LCI were endorsed by the "Majority Tendency" in USEC but were strongly denounced by leaders of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.¹² The PRT, supported at the time by the U.S. Trotskyists, apparently did not join the LCI on the *Republica* issue.

A few weeks later, in August 1975, another question divided the LCI and PRT. A number of the groups to the left of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) formed an alliance with the PCP and the pro-Communist faction of the MFA, establishing the People's United Front (FUP). In a statement explaining its participation in this front the LCI noted that it had certain disagreements with points in the front agreement, but that it considered it a move "to halt and defeat the current offensive of capitalist reaction."¹³

Only three days after the formation of the front the Communist Party was expelled from it by the other constituent members "after PCP leader Cunhal had called for a compromise with the sp."¹⁴ The other members of the group continued as the Front for Revolutionary Unity (FUR), which published its program early in September: "It includes a denunciation of the Constituent Assembly elections as part of a 'reactionary bourgeois offensive' and demands 'the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and opposing its bourgeois character.' It points out the road for a massive offensive to defeat the Social Democracy and to crush fascism . . . and for national independence from imperialism. . . ." ¹⁵

The PRT did not participate in either ver-

sion of this coalition. It issued a statement in *Combate Socialista*: "The PRT believes those organizations that had signed the Pact-Program . . . have so capitulated to a bourgeois government, the supporter of the antilabor 'battle for production.'" It appealed to the LCI "to denounce this popular front yourselves," and "to continue to combine forces with us in the task of unifying the revolutionary Marxist forces in a solid Revolutionary Workers Party. . . ."¹⁶

The LCI continued to be part of FUR for at least a year. It presumably was involved in the abortive coup d'état of November 25-26, 1975, but it did not go along with FUR's support of Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho in the 1976 presidential election.

The LCI and PRT joined in naming their own nominee in the 1976 election: Arleta Vieira, a one-time member of the underground Communist Party who had run as a PRT candidate in legislative elections in April 1975. Disaster overtook the candidacy. As Gerry Foley explains "The Trotskyist groups were taken by surprise when some newspapers proved that Vieira da Silva had not spent three years in prison on political charges as she said. . . . Objectively, this error was the result of the weakness of the small, young Trotskyist groups that have had to assume political responsibilities far beyond their organizational strength. . . ."¹⁷

The Partido Revolucionario do Proletariado

During this same period the Partido Revolucionario do Proletariado maintained a far left position. It was described as having "formed the CRTSMS, embryonic 'soviets' in the Lisbon region. . . ." It also had "considerable support from sections of the COPCOM," a faction of the MRA.¹⁸

Representatives of the "embryonic soviets" were brought together at a two-day congress in Lisbon in April 1975. It was claimed that there were delegates present from 150 "factories and organizations," as well as

from thirty-six "army units." The aim of the conference "was to deepen and unify the struggle for workers' control in the factories, and to form a network of powerful revolutionary workers' councils. It also aims to form soldiers' committees to fight for an end to officers' decorations and privileges."¹⁹ The main base for these "workers commissions" controlled by the PRP was the shipyard workers of Setenave and Llanave, said to be the world's largest shipyards.²⁰ The PRP abstained in the constituent assembly election of April 1975.²¹

The PRP was one of the two largest elements in the Frente de Unidade Revolucionaria, established in August 1975. In the months following the establishment of the FUR, the PRP, together with the Movimento de Esquerda Socialista, a Communist fellow-travelling split-off from the Socialist Party, argued "that an insurrection was necessary to avoid the danger of another Chile. But they expected it only after some weeks of building support for it in the factories."²² They did not have those "some weeks" before the attempted coup of November 25-26.

A U.S. source friendly to the PRP reported in October that "in the last month, the United Revolutionary Front which was formed in August has developed as a leading force in the working class. Within the Front, the Proletarian Revolutionary Party-Revolutionary Brigades (PRP-BR) is leading the political fight for arming workers and taking power. . . . The basic conditions for a workers' insurrection to seize power are rapidly developing in Portugal. The greatest test of the revolution is at hand: creating the powerful network of workers' commissions, militias, or councils that can seize the power."²³

The groups belonging to the FUR, including the PRP, only joined the November 1975 coup after they became convinced that the Communist Party was supporting it. Soon after they threw their support to the movement the PCR withdrew its backing.

The FUR, including PRP, supported the presidential candidacy of General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho in 1976. He was an officer who had headed the Army's "security forces" as well as being commander of the Lisbon military region for some months. Among his actions in that period was the prevention of reassertion of Socialist Party control over *Republica*. His ouster as Lisbon commander had sparked the November 25-26 coup attempt.²⁴

The issue of whether or not to continue to support the PRP provoked a split in the ranks of the International Socialist Tendency of International Trotskyism. The British IS "criticized the PRP for the slogan 'Unite, Organize, Arm' which was used in the fall of 1975. Only a party with power in the working class can call for arming. With soviets at an embryonic level and with no revolutionary party, the call for arming for insurrection was . . . premature in October 1975. . . ."

The American IS group, on the other hand, continued to support the PRP for some time: "they admitted the PRP was weak 'theoretically' on party building but that 'in practice' it had built a party. It did this, they argued, through taking key initiatives to build the revolution. . . . Disagreement over the PRP began to chill relations between the two ISS."²⁵

The Partido Socialista Revolucionario

For several years after the November 1975 events the LCI and PRP continued to exist as separate parties, although cooperating from time to time as in the 1976 election campaign. The LCI held several congresses during this period.

The Third Congress of the LCI was held in January 1976. It reviewed the events leading to the November 25-26 crisis and called for the LCI to concentrate on building up the "workers commissions" which had appeared more or less spontaneously during

the previous year and a half. It also went on record as favoring unification with the PRT.²⁶

The Fourth Congress of the LCI was held in February 1977. It was reported that "the approximately 100 delegates present adopted various documents unanimously or by majority vote. These dealt with the political situation and the building of the organization, work in the factories, work among student youth, work among women, the international situation, and the fusion with the Partido Revolucionario dos Trabalhadores. . . . The Congress also adopted new statutes and elected a new leadership."²⁷

With the ending of the decade-long split within the ranks of the United Secretariat in the late 1970s the LCI and PRT were finally united as the Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR). The united party participated in the December 1979 parliamentary election which overall was won by forces of the Center-Right.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the PSR on the night of the election issued a statement boasting that "the PSR was the only party that more than doubled its votes compared to the 1976 election results, showing a 127 percent growth. This result can be understood only in line with the real impact of our campaign." The PSR ran 352 candidates throughout the country. During the campaign they had the right to sixty-five minutes on television and twelve hours on various radio stations, and it was reported that "having profited from this unique occasion the PSR is now trying to consolidate itself on a national scale. . . ."²⁸

Parliamentary elections were again held in October 1980, in which the Center-Right was once more generally victorious. The PSR again felt that it did well in this poll. It received about one percent of the total vote, compared with 0.65 percent the year before.²⁹

About two months after the 1980 parliamentary elections there was a presidential poll. In this campaign the PSR supported ex-general Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. Early in November two representatives of the PSR,

Heitor de Sousa and Antonio Gomes, signed an official agreement with Carvalho on a program for the campaign.³⁰

At the time of the 1983 parliamentary election the PSR urged the need for an alliance of the Socialist and Communist parties and criticized strongly the refusal of both of those groups to join forces.³¹ It also urged establishment of a united bloc of all parties and groups to the left of the Socialists and Communists. An editorial in the party newspaper, *Combate Operario*, insisted on "the necessity of convergence of all revolutionary organizations, without exclusions and without sectarianism, in a Front of Unity in Action, in the struggles of today, the elections of tomorrow, the class struggles of the day after tomorrow. There is no time to lose."³²

As the presidential election of 1985 approached the PSR again urged unity around a left candidate. Its Executive Committee in July 1984 issued a statement to the effect that "for preparation of a VIABLE ALTERNATIVE CANDIDACY IN 1985, a working class candidate originating from discussions and deliberations of trade union delegates, Workers Commissions, activists in the struggle against austerity and repression, the PSR places all of its forces at the service of public discussion of launching a unitary working class candidacy."³³

In 1982 the United Secretariat claimed that the PSR was the second largest Portuguese political group to the left of the Communist Party. The largest such element was the União Democrática Popular, a former Maoist group. The PSR was said to be active in both existing trade union organizations, the Communists' Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores (CGTP) and the Socialists' União Geral dos Trabalhadores.³⁴

From time to time the Trade Union Committee of the PSR organized meetings of its trade union activists, to which sympathizers were also sometimes invited. Early in 1983 such sessions were held in Lisbon, Setúbal, Oporto, and Aveiro in preparation for a forthcoming congress of the CGTP. These

meetings stressed the themes of "labor unity" and "trade union democracy."³⁵

The Partido Operario de Unidade Socialista

Meanwhile, another Trotskyist party had come into existence in Portugal, an affiliate of the Lambertists' Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. This had been formed as the result of a split in the Socialist Party in 1977.

In January 1977 there was a purge of left-wing elements from the Socialist Party. At that time, the National Secretariat of the sp denounced what it called "Trotskyist infiltration" of the party and named in particular two deputies, Aires Rodrigues and Carmelinda Pereira, as leading "infiltrators."³⁶

Soon afterwards a party known as the Partido Operario de Unidade Socialista (POUS) was founded by those expelled from the Socialist ranks. The party ran candidates in both the 1979 and 1980 elections, in both cases their slates being headed by Aires Rodrigues and Carmelinda Pereira. In 1979 the POUS got about 0.2 percent of the vote and in 1980 it received 1.4 percent, and in some districts received the fourth largest total.³⁷ The Lambertists also participated in the December 1980 presidential election. They ran Aires Rodrigues as the POUS candidate.³⁸

The Partido Operario de Unidade Socialista had as its official organ the biweekly newspaper *O Militante Socialista*. In 1982 it carried on a strong campaign against constitutional modifications which were being carried out by the conservative government, to retreat to some degree from the nationalizations of firms and the agrarian reform which had been carried out after the failure of the second military coup of March 1975. It also regularly carried official news of the Provisional International Secretariat of the International Center for Reconstruction of the Fourth International, and of its national affiliates, especially that in neighboring Spain.³⁹

Posadista Fourth International

One of the most idiosyncratic and unorthodox factions of International Trotskyism to develop following the splintering of the original Fourth International in the 1950s was that led and completely dominated by the Argentine Homero Cristali, generally known by his pen name, J. Posadas. It was more or less active during the twenty years before his death in 1981, and at least some of the national "sections" of the Posadas version of the Fourth International survived his demise.

The Posadista Fourth International had its origins in the Latin American Bureau which Posadas had organized for the International Secretariat faction of the FI during the 1950s. When negotiations for reunification of the International Secretariat and the International Committee (which ultimately led to the establishment of the United Secretariat) got seriously underway, Posadas and the Latin American Bureau refused to go along with these negotiations. Instead, they established their own version of the Fourth International.

The Posadistas first general international gathering after the Emergency Conference which established their group as a separate faction they called the Seventh Congress of the Fourth International. It met in March 1964. A post-congress communiqué noted that it had been held "in Europe," without further elaboration, and that "delegates representing thirteen countries of Africa, Europe, and Latin America" attended and that the congress lasted ten days.

There were seven items on the agenda of the Posadista Seventh Congress. Four different people delivered reports to the meeting on the various agenda items, with Posadas himself giving the opening address and the organizational report. The communi-

qué noted the adoption of the following resolutions: "Political Resolution; Manifesto of the Congress for the 1st of May . . . Resolution on the capitulators, Livio Maitan, Michel Pablo, E. Germain, and Pierre Frank; Resolution on the Program of Transition for the Political Revolution; Resolution on the Program of Transition between the preparation of the atomic war by imperialism, the atomic war itself, the simultaneous Socialist Revolution, and the period of immediate socialist reconstruction of all humanity."¹

The communiqué on the Seventh Congress also reported on the activities of the various sections of the Posadista organization since the establishment of the international faction as a separate organization: "The Congress confirmed that only a year and a half after the reorganization of the European and African sections, of the constitution of new sections, these have reinforced themselves and maintain their bi-weekly or monthly publications in a regular way and have continued dynamic and developing activity in the struggle of the European proletariat, gaining authority and positions in it. Particularly, the Congress points out the activity of the Spanish section, which in spite of the repression of Franco, develops regular and growing activity."²

At that time, the "regularly appearing periodicals" were reported as coming out in Cuba, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Belgium (two, one in French, one in Flemish), Great Britain, Uruguay, Peru, Bolivia, Italy, France, Spain, and Algeria. In addition, the Posadista Fourth International was itself issuing two periodicals in Spanish, *Cuarta Internacional* and *Revista Marxista Latinoamericana*, both of which were published in Montevideo, Uruguay.³

The Eighth World Congress of the Posadas group was held in Europe in April 1967. A communiqué issued afterwards indicated that thirteen of the seventeen existing sections were represented with four not being able to send delegates "because of repression and clandestinity." Right after the con-

gress the organization held its First School of World Cadres and it was reported that forty-two people participated in either the congress or the school. Of the seventeen sections of the Posadista Fourth International in 1967, nine were reported as being in Latin America, six in Europe, and two in Africa.⁴

Again, the communiqué issued on the occasion of this congress gave some indication of the activity of the Posadas version of the Fourth International in the period since its previous meeting. It reported that fifteen national periodicals, in addition to *Revista Marxista Latinoamericana* and a European review in Italian, were being published. Also eighteen pamphlets on a variety of subjects, and one hundred "bulletins" in eight different languages had been issued. Special note was taken of a document on "Function and Structure of the IV International" which was proclaimed to be the "only document which continues the texts of the masters of Marxism, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky," and which "organizes the functioning in this stage of the IV International and of its revolutionary organs."⁵

The tenor of the discussion at the Eighth Congress is reflected in the communiqué's comment that "the sections of the IV International have been and are harmonized in thought and in the objectives of the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist World United Front, in support of the Political Revolution in China and in Cuba, support of the proletarian revolution, the world socialist revolution."⁶

At this Eighth Congress only Posadas and two other delegates, identified as comrades Arroyo and Ramírez, delivered reports on the various items on the agenda. In each case the reports were "adopted as resolutions" by the congress. One of these "resolutions" was an extended criticism by Posadas of the reports of comrades Arroyo and Ramírez.⁷

At the cadre school held right after the congress, five courses were given, all by J. Posadas. These were "Dialectical Materialism, Historical Materialism, Marxism:

Their Fundamentals," "What Is and What Remains of Capitalism," "History of the Labor Movement and of the IV International," "Construction, Structure, and Future of the Workers States," and "Analysis of the Atomic War, Its Consequences, and the Tasks for the Post-Atomic War."⁸

By 1971 the Posadas version of the Fourth International still claimed seventeen parties, each of which issued a periodical. A pamphlet published in Santiago, Chile, in June 1971 gave the list of the Posadista parties and their respective periodicals as the following:

Algeria: Goupe IV Internationale, clandestine, *Révolution Socialiste*
 Argentina: Partido Obrero (Trotskista), also clandestine, *Voz Proletaria*
 Belgium: Parti Ouvrier Révolutionnaire (Trotskiste), *Lutte Ouvrière*
 Bolivia: Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), *Lucha Obrera*
 Brazil: Partido Operario Revolucionario (Trotskista), clandestine, *Frente Operaria*
 Cuba: Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), *Voz Proletaria*
 Ecuador: Partido Comunista Revolucionario (Trotskista), *Lucha Comunista*
 France: Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire (Trotskiste), *Lutte Communiste*
 Germany: Grupe IV Internationale, *Arbeiter Stimme*
 Great Britain: Revolutionary Workers Party (Trotskyst), *Red Flag*
 Greece: Revolutionary Communist Party, clandestine, *Kommonisti Kipali*
 Italy: Partito Comunista Rivoluzionario (Trotskista), *Lotta Operaia*
 Mexico: Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), illegal, *Voz Obrera*
 Middle East: *Révolution Socialiste* was the "organ of Arab and Persian militants"
 Peru: Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), *Vox Obrera*
 Uruguay: Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), *Frente Obrero*

It was also noted that the *Revista Marxista Latinoamericana* appeared as the "Or-

gan of the International Secretariat of the IV International," coming out of Montevideo, Uruguay, but with editions also in Argentina, Mexico, Bolivia, and Spain. Also, the *European Marxist Review* appeared in English, Italian, and French as the "Organ of the European Bureau of the IV International."⁹

The Tenth (and presumably last) Congress of the Posadas version of the Fourth International took place in July 1975. It is interesting to note that the session was officially called the "X World Congress of the Trotskyist-Posadista International." No information is available concerning how many national groups were represented. It is clear from Posadas's own discussion at the meeting that the organization and its national sections were having difficulties. At one point Posadas urged: "Among the objectives which all the sections must have, from the French to the Greek section, Mexican—is to regularize the publications, have good texts, raise political capacity, organize, elevate, and educate new leaders. . . ." ¹⁰ At another point Posadas indicated that the publications of the International itself were no longer appearing regularly: "At the same time that we salute with all our Communist love the decision of the Latin American sections, the decision of the Latin American Bureau to publish *Revista Marxista*, we propose as a resolution: that the sections of each continent, in various countries, undertake to publish *Revista Marxista*. . . . Publishing the regular periodical . . . there is solution for all the present deficiencies. . . ." ¹¹

One difficulty faced by the Posadas Fourth International was that of maintaining a viable headquarters for the movement. Until 1965 it was based in Uruguay. In October of that year the Montevideo police raided the headquarters of the Posadas party there and broke up a meeting of the Posadas Fourth International.¹² From then on it was very difficult for the Posadas group to maintain a solid base of operations. There is some indication that until the fall of the Allende

regime they may have functioned out of Santiago, Chile. Thereafter Posadas seems to have spent most of his time in Europe—and where Posadas was, the headquarters of his Fourth International was also.

Posadas died in Italy some time in 1981.¹³ With him certainly died his version of the Fourth International. However, some of the Posadas national groups continued to function. Thus, there continued to appear in Brazil *Frente Operaria*, which was identified on its masthead as the “spokesman for Posadista thought in Brazil.” Six of the eight pages of its September 1983 issue were taken up with old articles by Posadas, while half of the four pages of the May 1984 issue were also taken up by Posadas’s writings.¹⁴

The Posadas Cult of Personality

From the inception of the Posadas Fourth International it was more or less completely dominated by J. Posadas. We have already noted his predominant role in the various world congresses of the group, and that in its later phases what had started out as “The Fourth International” was officially transformed into “The Trotskyist-Posadista Fourth International.”

The publications of the Posadas version of the Fourth International were largely filled with the writings of Posadas himself. They were also fulsome in their praise of Posadas. Typical is the introduction to a pamphlet by Posadas published in commemoration of Trotsky on the twenty-seventh anniversary of his assassination:

It was and is the theoretical, political, and organizational capacity of J. Posadas, to understand the forms of the Revolution in this stage of history, to comprehend profoundly the nature of the mass movements, to understand the stage of final settling of accounts, based on the confidence, on the indestructible revolutionary capacity of the masses, and the revolutionary will based on assurance and

confidence in themselves, that is the same as Trotsky and all our teachers, Marx, Engels, and Lenin, to construct the ranks and leading cadres of the IV International. . . . The role of Comrade J. Posadas, like that of Trotsky . . . is that of assuring the continuity of Marxism, applying it creatively and scientifically in this stage of history, building the conscious leadership group.¹⁵

Similarly, most of the activity of the sections of the Posadas Fourth International was centered on getting out as regularly as possible newspapers and other documents which were largely devoted to propagating the ideas of J. Posadas. For example, the issue of *Voz Obrera*, organ of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista) of Peru, for the second fortnight of October 1969, devoted half its space to a long article by Posadas, the other half dealing with a public meeting the party was arranging.¹⁶ Likewise, the May 30, 1972, issue of *Frente Obrero*, organ of the Uruguayan Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), devoted four and a half of its eight pages to a resolution of the International Secretariat “based on the ideas and thought of Comrade J. Posadas,” and to an article by Posadas.¹⁷ The issue of *Voz Obrera*, organ of the Mexican Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), for the first fortnight of April 1975 carried no less than four articles by Posadas, taking up five of its eight pages.¹⁸

Although Posadas’s published criticisms of two of the reporters to the 1967 World Congress would seem to indicate that at that time there were still some people in the leadership of the Posadista Fourth International who did not totally accept all of his ideas and interpretations of reality, such dissidence certainly did not persist. Indeed, Posadas developed a concept of the organizational nature of the Fourth International which varied substantially from that which Trotsky had supposedly defended.

Posadas developed a peculiarly elitist con-

cept of "democratic centralism." He commented in a speech which was adopted as a resolution of the plenum of his International Secretariat in February 1966 that "the organization of the Party and of the International must permit that the elements which are most capable, most developed, or which can develop themselves most, because this is the unequal and combined development of mankind, can influence the Party, and carry it along, elevate it consciously to the objectives of the necessity of history . . . without all having to reach the same scientific comprehension of the whole of history, of society, and of socialism."¹⁹

Posadas elaborated on how this worked out in practice: "for example, the Party receives an article, reads it, discusses it, is harmonized. . . . In the International, when Vietnam began, there were three interpretations, two of them erroneous. It was necessary to write immediately. An Italian comrade wrote an article, an Uruguayan another, and Comrade Posadas wrote another. The comrades needed to write and they wrote. When they read the article by Posadas they fell into line, and activity went forward."²⁰

Speaking at the 1975 Tenth World Congress of his group Posadas again defined this concept of organization by commenting on the meeting: "There was not a single dispute. It is the most homogeneous Congress, not because we put disputes aside, but because there was no room for disputes." He went on to add that "if the movement is not monolithic and centralizedly monolithic, it leaves the condition open to insecurity, to doubt, to preoccupation with irrelevant problems or secondary problems: then it distracts attention. . . ."²¹

Understandably, with such a monolithic form of organization, this version of the Fourth International became totally identified with the ideas and versions of current reality which were being expressed at any given time by J. Posadas. During the approximately twenty years of existence of his Fourth International, Posadas wrote and

spoke prodigiously. He had a tortured method of expression which at times bordered on incomprehensibility. In his talks and publications he would weave together recent or current events in the most divergent parts of the world, to reach conclusions about the progress of the revolution.

A whole volume would be necessary to trace all the ideas and interpretations which Posadas advanced during this period. Note can be taken of a few of them which strongly differentiated his "line" from that of the orthodox elements in International Trotskyism.

One of the first questions on which Posadas and his followers adopted a position that was drastically different from that of other groups claiming loyalty to Trotskyism was that of atomic war. Particularly during the early years of the Posadas Fourth International, he and it were proclaiming the inevitability of the outbreak of atomic war in the very near future, and arguing that this was the supreme opportunity for the forces of the world revolution.

This was a theme of the Seventh World Congress of the Posadista group. In his "Report on Organization" which was adopted as a resolution of that congress Posadas said, "We are preparing ourselves for a stage in which before the atomic war we shall struggle for power, during the atomic war we shall struggle for power and we shall be in power, and immediately after the atomic war we shall be in power. There is no beginning, there is an end to atomic war, because atomic war is simultaneous revolution in the whole world, not as a chain reaction, simultaneous. Simultaneity doesn't mean the same day and the same hour. Great historic events should not be measured by hours or days, but by periods. . . . The working class alone will maintain itself, will immediately have to seek its cohesion and centralization. . . ."²²

Two years later, at an Amplified Meeting of the International Secretariat in February 1966, a manifesto written by Posadas was

adopted which was even more specific about the coincidence of atomic war and the victory of the world revolution:

After destruction commences, the masses are going to emerge in all countries—in a short time, in a few hours. Capitalism cannot defend itself in an atomic war except by putting itself in caves and attempting to destroy all that it can. The masses, in contrast, are going to come out, will have to come out, because it is the only way to survive, defeating the enemy. There is going to be a chainlike social reaction, and the preparation for the war, the days which precede it, will signify also a preparation for the masses. It is necessary to foresee that everywhere there will be a collapse of the power of capitalism. The apparatus of capitalism, police, army, will not be able to resist, will flee, will attempt to save themselves individually. . . . It will be necessary to organize the workers' power immediately, even on a limited basis, without waiting to control a whole country or even all of a city. . . .²³

The definition by Posadas and his followers of which regimes were "workers states" also differed markedly from that of other factions of International Trotskyism. Before the splintering of the Fourth International there had been general agreement that the Soviet Union, the countries overrun by the Soviet Army at the end of World War II, Yugoslavia, Albania, Outer Mongolia, North Korea, North Vietnam, and China were "workers states." Subsequently, the Socialist Workers Party of the U.S. baptized the Castro regime with that title, a decision which was more or less reluctantly agreed to by the rest of the United Secretariat, although not by all of the other factions of International Trotskyism.

Posadas and his followers accepted those same regimes as being "workers states," including Cuba, as well as accepting the existence of generally nationalized means of

production and planning as the justification for this definition, as did most other Trotskyists. They also took the traditional position of the Trotskyist movement about the need to defend the Soviet Union and other supposedly workers states.

But Posadas went far beyond this. He was quite openhanded in christening a variety of other regimes "workers states," sometimes with clarifying adjectives. At one point in 1967 the International Secretariat of the Posadas group proclaimed that "if the data which has been sent us is verified, Syria is a Workers State. . . ." ²⁴ The Secretariat also declared that "the International must follow closely the evolution of a series of countries of Africa [and] Asia, which are developing into Workers States, such as Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Mali, Guinea, Congo Brazzaville, etc., to determine when they pass into being Workers States."²⁵

Late in 1974 Posadas was willing to accept the new regime established in Ethiopia after the ouster of Haile Selassie as a workers state. Speaking to a World Cadres School he claimed that:

One of the most notable, most determining things about this stage in history, is that any backward country, like those of Latin America, Asia, or Africa, which wishes to overcome economic, social, scientific backwardness in which capitalism maintains them, immediately assumes forms of a Workers State. They statize, plan, raise the unions to the role of direction of society, and raise women to participation in society. All, from Dahomey to Ethiopia. Ethiopia lived backwardness. The generals, the military who lived supporting the Negus, killing, lived in separation from the rest of the world. Those same military pass from the opprobrium which Ethiopia signified, to a Workers State. It is not yet constructed, but in their heads now is the Workers State. They pass from being assassins to defend the Workers State.²⁶

Posadas frequently made grotesquely exaggerated claims about the influence of his version of the Fourth International. In one of his many discourses on atomic war, he wrote: "Until six months ago the Chinese totally ignored this question. Today, they put this conclusion at the center of their analysis, taking complete phrases from the articles of Posadas."²⁷ In the Posadas Fourth International's 1970 May Day Manifesto it was claimed that "in the next phase, the pressure of the masses is going to lead to the organization and development of a consciously revolutionary leadership in the Communist Parties. Imperialism is helpless to contain this process. To the contrary, it is constantly accelerated by the authority and influence of Posadas and of the Fourth International in the Communist movement."²⁸

Upon the death of J. Posadas, his one-time ally and subsequent antagonist, Michel Raptis (Pablo), wrote an obituary. After paying tribute to the contribution which Posadas had made in the late 1940s and the 1950s in spreading the Trotskyist movement in Latin America, Raptis commented on Posadas's role as head of his own schismatic Trotskyist movement:

This perception of revolutionary dynamism of our epoch took him imperceptibly to a veritable delirium, expression without nuances of an eccentric voluntarism. . . . He became thus the preacher of the "permanent revolution" simultaneously and everywhere, to the point of giving it an interplanetary dimension. . . . [L]ost in the confusion of his thoughts and his desires, [Posadas] saw himself equal and superior to the greatest thinkers and captains of the world revolution. Imperceptibly, his enterprise took on truly grotesque dimensions. . . . "Posadism" evolved into a caricature. However, that is not unique in the international labor movement, particularly in the international revolutionary left. Often lacking

real entry into social reality, to survive it calls for the creation of a closed microcosm, around a "leadership," or a "leader" to whom it voluntarily attributes all its dreams of power, assurance and success, which it cannot itself assume in the real class combat.²⁹

It is difficult to quarrel with this assessment of Posadas.

Trotskyism in Puerto Rico

During two different periods, in the 1930s and then in the 1970s and 1980s, Trotskyist parties have existed in Puerto Rico. In both cases they operated completely independent of the Trotskyist movement in the United States.

The first Trotskyist group in Puerto Rico was the Partido Comunista Independiente, established in 1934 by Communist leaders who objected to intervention in the Puerto Rican CP by the CP of the United States. The party continued to exist at least until 1939, when it was reported that it was bringing out a publication entitled *Chispa* (Spark). Pierre Naville reported to the Fourth International Founding Conference the existence of the Puerto Rican section, although he gave no indication of its name or number of members.¹

The first step in the reestablishment of a Trotskyist movement in Puerto Rico, after a lapse of almost thirty-five years, came with the organization late in 1974 of the Liga de Juventud Comunista (LJC—League of Communist Youth). It was an organization principally of students, although it aspired to win some support in the labor movement by distributing leaflets to workers of the Water and Power Authority who went on strike a few weeks after the group was established.²

By 1976 the LJC had been converted into the Liga Internacionalista de los Trabajadores (LIT—Internationalist Workers League). In that year's general election campaign it gave "critical support" to the candidates of the Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño (PSP), a Fidelista-oriented party. At one mass meeting of the PSP's campaign, the LIT reported selling 200 copies of their periodical, *La Verdad*, and distributing 800

copies of their platform.³ The LIT was aligned with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.⁴

After the Reagan government came to power in the United States in 1981 the Puerto Rican Trotskyists complained on a number of occasions of being harassed by both the Puerto Rican police and FBI agents on the island.⁵

When the PSP at its Third Congress in October 1982 adopted a new platform ending its self-designation as a "vanguard party," the Liga Internacionalista de los Trabajadores published an attack on this move in *La Verdad*.⁶

Trotskyism in Romania

Probably one of the shortest-lived national Trotskyist groups was that of Romania, which existed for a few years in the 1930s. Leon Trotsky had in November 1935 expressed the hope that the Unified Socialist Party of Romania would "soon recognize the need to join the great work of construction of the IV International." That party had been established two years before by a merger of the Independent Socialist Party and a faction which broke away from the Romanian Socialist Party, a Second Internationalist group. The Unified Socialist Party was at the time associated with the London Bureau. It never did join the International Trotskyist movement.¹

In the meantime, however, a small Bolshevik Leninist Group had been established in April 1935, apparently by some young former Communist Party members. David Korner, writing under his pseudonym Barta, informed the International Secretariat that the group was "very young, struggle with great difficulties (illegally)," and that they "suffer the full might of the Stalinist apparatus which creates around us an insupportable atmosphere seeking to undermine us by all means: calumnies, menaces, injuries ('Hitler's agents,' 'provocateurs,' 'syphlitics')."

Korner reported that the group had published and circulated clandestinely several documents of the international movement. These included "The Fourth International and War," "The Fourth International and the USSR," Trotsky's "Open Letter to the French Workers," and his article "Who Defends the USSR and Who Aids Hitler?"

Korner also reported that "our group has grown numerically and been purified." He added that "we are organized in cells which are working regularly in education and prac-

tice." He argued that "the most urgent task is to form ideologically well educated cadres. . . . In particular, we must study the history of the Romanian labor movement from a Marxist point of view, work which has never been undertaken in Romania; and elaborate an analysis and perspective for Romania, in close connection with the international situation."

In particular, Korner stressed that it was necessary "to sharply differentiate ourselves from all other tendencies, above all the 'unitarians' who create great confusion, notably by their centrist position ('total unity') towards the new International."²

Within a short time after establishing the Bolshevik Leninist Group, Barta, his wife Louise, and Nicolas Spoulber, another leading figure in the Romanian Bolshevik Leninist Group, emigrated to France. There Barta was first active in the Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste and subsequently founded the dissident Trotskyist group in France which ultimately became *Lutte Ouvrière*.³ It was reported at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in September 1938 that the Romanian Bolshevik Leninist Group was still "in contact" with the International Secretariat.⁴

There is no indication that any attempt was made to revive the Trotskyist movement in Romania after the Second World War.

South African Trotskyism

The earliest, longest-lasting and most influential of the African Trotskyist movements was that of South Africa. Its organizational history began in the early 1930s and continued for more than twenty years. For a short period, the Trotskyists had at least some influence in the organized labor movement.

After the mid-1950s organized Trotskyist groups in South Africa led a fitful existence. However, the influence of at least some Trotskyist ideas persisted even among people and groups who did not necessarily consider themselves Trotskyists, and those who had gotten their political education in the Trotskyist movement played major roles in non-European organizations fighting against the expansion and intensification of white racism throughout the country.

Beginning of South African Trotskyism

South African Trotskyism was established as a consequence of purges in the South African Communist Party carried out on the orders of the Stalin-dominated Communist International, commencing as early as 1930. Both Left and Right Oppositionists were expelled in those purges, and the purges served to reduce the CP, which had made considerable progress in organized labor and the rural black community during the first six years after its establishment in 1922, to an isolated and almost impotent sect.¹

One of the first of the supporters of Trotsky to be expelled from the South African Communist ranks, Frank Glass, found his way some years later to China. There he worked with the Chinese Trotskyist movement for many years under the name Li Fu Jen.²

According to Tony Southall, the first Trotskyist group to be established was the Lenin Club, which was founded in Cape Town in 1933 "basically by Yiddish-speaking comrades who were expelled from a Stalinist front organization called Geserd. They were joined by a previously established study group, the Marxist Educational League conducted by Trotskyists expelled from the CP and by a small Trotskyist faction from the Independent Labor Party." Southall added that its composition was "largely white and petty bourgeois and it engaged mainly in educational work. The organization 'went public' in May 1934 with a May Day Manifesto."³

According to Pierre Broué, this May Day Manifesto, "opposed unity of black and white workers to the slogan advanced by the CPSA from the beginning of the 'third period' of a 'black republic,' explaining that the latter sought to make the backward peasants the vanguard of the revolution." Broué added that "it underscored the clash of interests between ... 'the bourgeoisie of the Boers' and British imperialism, and insisted on the development of the legal activities of the revolutionary organization."⁴

The Lenin Club carried out extensive activities to propagate Trotskyist ideas. Edward Roux, a not particularly friendly observer, commented that "lectures and debates at the Lenin Club drew large audiences."⁵ They attracted some members of the Coloured (racially mixed) community, and some of these were active in the Coloured Unemployment League, which reportedly had 30,000 members at that time.⁶

Although there were "unifying factors" in the Lenin Club its leaders "were divided on many of the issues which had once racked the CPSA. They argued inside the Club as they had once argued in the ranks of the Communist Party about the role of the Afrikaner and about the land question. They had differences on trade union matters, on the nature of the coming war, and on the structure of the new party."⁷

Trotsky's Advice to His South African Followers

The Lenin Club soon established contacts both with the Paris headquarters of the international Trotskyist movement and with the Communist League of America. As a consequence, when the Lenin Club suffered a split within about a year of its establishment both factions in the split sent documents to Trotsky explaining their points of view on the road to revolution in South Africa. Unfortunately, copies of neither document survive. It seems likely that Trotsky did not receive one of these documents, but did get that of the faction which was soon to establish the Workers' Party of South Africa.⁸ He sent back a fairly extensive critique of that thesis. Also, Ruth Fischer, then a member of the International Secretariat, published in the *Internal Bulletin of the Left Opposition* in May 1935 a commentary on the Workers' Party of South Africa document. From Trotsky's reply and Fischer's note one can get some idea of the nature of the "Theses."

Trotsky started his comments by congratulating his South African supporters for their "serious study of both the economic and political conditions of South Africa, as well as of the literature of Marxism and Leninism, particularly that of the Bolshevik-Leninists." He then professed to great ignorance of South African conditions, but added that he did have "to express [his] disagreement with certain aspects of the draft theses."

Trotsky's observations centered essentially on three questions: the nature of the South African Trotskyists' rejection of the slogan of a "black republic" being put forward by the Stalinists; the relationship of the agrarian and "national" (race) questions among the blacks; and the absolute necessity to repudiate all racial chauvinism on the part of white workers. In making his arguments, Trotsky frequently employed parallels he saw in South Africa with the

situation in prerevolutionary and revolutionary Russia.

With regard to the black republic issue, Trotsky said that no revolution in South Africa would be possible without full participation of the blacks. Furthermore, the post-revolutionary "South African republic will emerge first of all as a 'black' republic; this does not exclude, of course, either full equality for the whites or brotherly relations between the two races—depending mainly on the conduct of the whites. But it is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state."

More specifically, Trotsky was critical of the terms in which his South African friends rejected the Stalinists' black republic idea:

When the theses say that the slogan of a "black republic" is *equally* harmful for the revolutionary cause as is the slogan of a "South Africa for the whites," then we cannot agree with the form of the statement. Whereas in the latter there is the case of supporting complete oppression, in the former there is the case of taking the first steps toward liberation. . . .

We must accept decisively and without any reservations the complete and unconditional right of the blacks to independence. . . . It is possible that *after* the victory the blacks will find it unnecessary to form a separate black state in South Africa. Certainly we will not force them to establish a separate state. But let them make this decision freely, on the basis of their own experience. . . . The proletarian revolutionaries must never forget the right of the oppressed nationalities to self-determination, including full separation, and the duty of the proletariat of the oppressing nation to defend this right with arms in hand, if necessary.⁹

At about the same time, Trotsky was giving advice to his U.S. followers which was much the same as these comments to the

South Africans, with regard to the attitude to be assumed towards the U.S. Stalinists' slogan of "self-determination in the Black Belt." However, subsequently Hosea Jaffe, a leader of the South African Trotskyists in the 1930s, was to suggest that Trotsky in his discussion of the "right of separation" may not adequately have understood the issue in its South African context, and so misunderstood the basis of the South African Trotskyists' position. Drawing a false analogy with the situation in Czarist Russia, Trotsky did not realize that in South Africa separation "might in fact imply a partition of South Africa on a racial basis, pushing the blacks into the poorest areas," and that the blacks sought "not 'self-determination' but unity."¹⁰

Trotsky advised his South African friends that it was not enough merely to say, as they did in their theses, that "we must not compete with the African National Congress [ANC] in nationalist slogans in order to win the native masses." Rather, he suggested to them the need to defend the ANC "when it is being attacked by the white oppressors," to "place the progressive over the reactionary tendencies in the program of the Congress," to expose the inability of the Congress to achieve its goals "because of its superficial, conciliatory policy," and the possibility for "separate episodic agreements with the Congress . . . within the framework of strictly defined practical tasks, with the retention of full and complete independence of our own organization and freedom of political criticism."

For lack of sufficient knowledge to the contrary, Trotsky accepted the South Africans' insistence that for the time being "the agrarian and not the national demands must be put in the first place, insofar as the blacks are concerned." However, he observed that "this extreme political backwardness was also expressed" in the blacks' lack of national self-consciousness. At the same time, he felt very sharply the land and fiscal bondage. Given these conditions "propaganda can and must first of all flow from the slo-

gans of the agrarian revolution, in order that, step by step, on the basis of the experience of the struggle, the peasantry may be brought to the necessary *political and national* conclusions."

At two points Trotsky warned against any concessions to white chauvinism in order to win over white workers:

To push aside or to weaken the national slogans with the object of not antagonizing the white chauvinists in the ranks of the working class would be, of course, criminal opportunism, which is absolutely alien to the authors and supporters of the theses. This flows quite clearly from the text of the theses, which is permeated with the spirit of revolutionary internationalism. . . .

The proletariat of the country consists of backward black pariahs and a privileged, arrogant caste of whites. . . . In any case, the worst crime on the part of the revolutionaries would be to give the smallest concessions to the privileges and prejudices of the whites. Whoever gives his little finger to the devil of chauvinism is lost.¹¹

Pierre Broué has cited Hosea Jaffe as maintaining that "this text of Trotsky marked the starting point of a long and rich discussion within all the South African antiracist and anti-imperialist organizations, in which men and women took part who would be among the founders and inspirers of organizations such as the All-African Convention (1936), the National Liberation League (1938), the Non-European United Front (1939), the Non-European Unity Movement (1943), etc." Broué added that "M. Jaffe in effect considers that the program of the liberation movement of South Africa had been elaborated starting with the fundamental ideas expressed by Trotsky in this text."¹²

South African Trotskyists' Mistaken(?) Interpretations of Reality

Tony Southall has argued that the South African Trotskyists had two basic miscon-

ceptions about their country which have survived since the 1930s and help to account for the lack of a continuing Trotskyist movement in South Africa: the failure to see the compatibility of apartheid with continuing capitalist economic development of the country, and the consequent misconceptions of the role of the white workers in the revolution; and exaggerated emphasis on the role of rural blacks as the major source of revolutionary ardor and organization. Furthermore, the theses commented on by Trotsky "overestimate the part likely to be played by the white proletariat in the South African revolution. This error is based on an inaccurate assessment of the likely developments affecting their wages and conditions and a mistaken analysis of segregation and apartheid as fetters on the development of capitalism in South Africa. These mistakes lead particularly to a devaluation of the key importance of the national question."¹³

The South African Trotskyists apparently believed that the exigencies of the economics of South African capitalism would sooner or later (and rather sooner than later) force an end to the relatively privileged position of the white workers. Southall has quoted Ruth Fischer's commentary on the 1934 document: "The theses state the following: with the rationalization of industrial methods, evening up progresses, consequently indigenous workers draw nearer in salaries to the white workers. This is suggested as a permanent tendency." In October 1938, the Workers' Party of South Africa wrote in its periodical: "White workers' interests are the same as those of the black man. . . . It is time for the white workers to realize that the whiplash that is now directed against the Natives will one day be directed against their own backs. . . . Their interests are ultimately identical with those of the natives."

As late as 1945 a leading Trotskyist and former WPSA leader, B. M. Kies, commented that "the European worker must ultimately become the ally of the non-European oppressed, for economic exploitation and na-

tional or color oppression spring from the same root." In that same year, the Fourth International Organization of South Africa (FIOSA), the rival of the WPSA, also stated that "it will be short-sighted not to see . . . that in the coming period the bourgeoisie will be forced to make greater and greater cuts in the cost of maintaining the white labor aristocracy." Other quotes could be found in the same genre as late as the 1960s.¹⁴

Southall cited the second erroneous position of the South African Trotskyists as being contained in the 1934 document's claim that "the principal question surrounding the native problem is the agrarian question. . . . Our main slogan must be: land to the natives with each entitled to as much land as he can cultivate." Commenting on Trotsky's observations on the need to bring the peasants to "the necessary political and national conclusions," he observed that they "were never built upon by the South African comrades. . . . Rather most of them clung throughout the following thirty years to the notion which was already outdated in 1934, that the agrarian question was the 'alpha and omega of the struggle'. . . . They paid little heed to the rapidly growing incorporation of the blacks in the urban labor force."

Southall ended these comments by saying that these "errors" constituted "a first class example, in an unfortunately negative sense of the need for and potential value of a revolutionary international. Without doubt had our movement had the means by which to bring the insights of Trotsky and Fischer to bear then the history of its subsequent interventions would have been substantially different. . . . But from 1935 until the 1960s there took place absolutely no political discussion at the international level of the problems of the South African revolution. . . ."¹⁵

Trotskyism in Cape Province

After the split in the Lenin Club in 1934 two organizations emerged, the Workers' Party of South Africa (WPSA), and what was first

called the Communist League of South Africa (CLSA). According to Charles van Gelderen, a participant in the Lenin Club and the split, "The overt reason for the split was the 'French Turn.' The group led by Burlak took much the same line as Oehler in the United States but there was also an underlying reason—open work or what Burlak called 'semi-legal' work."¹⁶ It was those who opposed the French Turn and who urged a semiclandestine existence for the group who formed the WPSA and their opponents who established the CLSA.

There were also other issues which split the two groups. The Workers' Party people (or Spartacists as they were sometimes called) argued that "all the forces of Capitalism . . . will join hands in the counterrevolutionary struggle against any anti-imperialist struggle on the part of the Native workers and peasants"; while the Communist League people, according to Baruch Hirson, "believed that Afrikaner nationalists might be won to an anti-imperialist position in the event of war being declared, and that this would bring appreciable sections of the Afrikaner workers into the revolutionary camp."¹⁷

The two groups also disagreed over the land question. The Workers' Party argued that "the Native Problem is mainly the Agrarian Problem," and could be resolved only by giving the blacks the land. The Communist League saw no such land hunger among the blacks, and thought that the problems of the Africans came from "the oppressive and unendurable role they occupy in the economic structure" of the country.¹⁸

Pierre Broué has claimed that the majority of the Lenin Club went with the Workers' Party at the time of the split.¹⁹ However, van Gelderen has written that "Broué is wrong when he claims that those who formed the Workers Party were in the majority. This was not initially the case. The supporters of the 'French Turn' and entry of the American Trotskyists into the SP (which Burlak also

opposed 'on principle') were in a clear majority and this is established by the fact that they retained possession of the premises and apparatus."²⁰

In any case, it is clear that the International Secretariat did not think that the split was justified. In the 15 minutes of May 22, 1935, it was noted that that body did not consider the differences between the two groups was sufficient to explain the schism in the South African Trotskyists' ranks.²¹ Nevertheless, the existence of two separate Trotskyist organizations in South Africa continued for about five years. The persistence of two groups, although only one was a formal Trotskyist organization, continued for about a decade longer.

According to Hirson, "The leaders of the Cape Town groups . . . were white—but not necessarily Jewish—but they were able to win over Coloured and African leaders, and it was these latter who became leaders of the Non-European Unity Movement after 1943. This included Goolam Gool, I. B. Tabata, and others who had an extensive following in the Cape Province."²² The Cape Town Trotskyists sometimes got involved in internal quarrels in the various non-European groups. Thus late in 1938, when there was a split in the largely Colored National Liberation League, one of the factions was headed by Goolam Gool, and *Spark* carried vituperative arguments supporting that faction—so vituperative that they were finally apologized for by some members of the Workers' Party.

The Trotskyists also sometimes collaborated with other political tendencies in their work among the non-European groups. H. S. and R. E. Simons have noted that "Communists, Trotskyists, and members of every racial group sat together at the Non-European United Front Conference in Cape Town on 8 April 1939. C. van Gelderen represented the Fourth International; B. Kies, the New Era Fellowship, a students' society allegedly under Trotskyist influence. . . ."²³

Between 1934 and 1939 the Workers'

Party of South Africa appears to have been the more active of the two groups. It published a mimeographed monthly periodical, *Spark*, on a regular basis between May 1935 and June 1939, each issue containing sixteen to twenty pages. According to Southhall, *Spark* "dealt with the whole range of international questions of the period—producing especially substantial amounts of Trotsky's material. On South Africa its essentially 'commentary' articles on Trades Union Struggles and on development of the All-African Convention suggest a lack of much direct involvement, although the wpsa did have three comrades at the second national delegate meeting of the latter in June 1936." The wpsa did have some colored and African members during this period.

In June 1939 *Spark* announced that it was closing down, blaming this move on a new press law and expected persecution in the impending war, and saying that it was going to "cease publication rather than submit to the enemy."

More significant than the closing of the newspaper was the fact that the Workers' Party of South Africa appears to have ceased to function as an organization: "In fact those of its cadre who remained active after 1939 seem to have become exclusively involved in the leadership of the Unity Movement [first conference 1943]." Southhall noted that the only evidence of continued activity of the wpsa as an organization after 1939 was an election manifesto, of unnamed date, signed on behalf of the Workers' Party by Leon Szur.²⁴

Concerning ex-wpsa members' participation in the Non-European Unity Movement, Southhall noted that "the fact that Trotskyists . . . here for the first time took part in leading positions in a mass movement of the nonwhite population must be noted as a potentially enormous step forward for the movement." Former Lenin Club members, including I. B. Tabata, Ali Fataar, Jane Gool, and Dora Taylor "actually maintained leadership of the NEUM until its disintegration

in the 1960s. . . . It is certain that they continued right through this period to meet together and to discuss tactics within the movement and even wider political questions. But they existed as a leadership clique and not as a visible political tendency within the movement. Nor did they attempt to use their positions in the movement to advance Trotskyist politics."

Thus, in spite of the leading role of Trotskyists in one of the major non-European organizations of South Africa of the 1940s and 1950s, Trotskyism as a movement did not particularly benefit from that role. Indeed, the Trotskyist organization to which the leaders had once belonged apparently did not even continue in existence. The Trotskyists had "submerged themselves" in the NEUM, without establishing themselves as Trotskyists in that group.²⁵

The other faction to emerge from the Lenin Club, the Communist League of South Africa, changed its name sometime after 1935 to the Fourth International Organization of South Africa (FIOSA). It continued public activity as a Trotskyist group for considerably longer than did the wpsa. It continued to publish a periodical, *Workers' Voice*, of which Charles van Gelderen was the first editor.²⁶

As Edward Roux has noted, "This section of Trotskyists gained considerable influence among the younger generation of Coloured teachers and university students in the Cape. Dr. Goolam Gool and a number of students played a prominent part in propaganda. . . ." ²⁷ The FIOSA recruited some members in Port Elizabeth, although its principal base continued to be Cape Town. Members of the FIOSA were also active in the 1940s in the Non-European Unity Movement, and were particularly influential in the Anti Colored Affairs Department, one of the groups making up the NEUM. The FIOSA people were rather more critical of the liberal reformist line of the NEUM than were the former wpsa leaders.²⁸

The FIOSA had some significance in an-

other connection. Several of its leaders migrated to Great Britain, where they became active in and leaders of different factions of British Trotskyism.²⁹

The FIOSA continued its connection with the Fourth International. It was represented at the Second Congress of the International in 1948 and that meeting accepted a resolution in favor of reunification of the South African Trotskyist movement. That resolution read:

The World Congress records that the FIOSA (Fourth International Organization in South Africa) which is based on the programmatic positions of the IVth International has sought to realize unity in South Africa through fusion with the Workers' Party, which has not been possible so far. In the absence of a programmatic base sufficient to justify the existence of two groups in South Africa, the World Congress charges the International Executive Committee with establishing one united section in South Africa and, towards that end, gives it the power to disaffiliate if necessary the organization which will not apply its decisions and to reconstitute the South African section of the IVth International.³⁰

Whether this resolution reflected the fact that there really still were two functioning Trotskyist organizations in South Africa, or was perhaps based on inadequate information, is not clear. In any case, there is no indication that such unification as the motion ordered in fact took place. The FIOSA itself appears to have gone out of existence in 1954, as a result "of its failure to build any mass base independent of its activity in the NEUM or to break out of its being composed overwhelmingly of intellectuals."³¹

The Johannesburg Trotskyists

Johannesburg was another center of Trotskyist activity and organization from the

1930s onward. It was also the one part of the country in which the Trotskyists developed some influence in the organized labor movement, notably among African workers.

Hixon has described the early Trotskyist movement in Johannesburg: "In Johannesburg two or more groups appeared in the early 1930s, made up of persons expelled from the CP. Some were black, but most were white—and this included people like Ralph Lee and his wife Millie, Ted Grant and others who later went to GB and helped revive the Trotskyist group there. Lee tried his hand at organizing African workers, but was not oversuccessful. Then along came Max Gordon from Cape Town, and with the assistance of some very capable Africans got a trade union movement off the ground."³²

In the 1920s the Communists had organized a number of African workers unions in the Johannesburg area, including a Non-European Trade Union Federation. But, "this body disintegrated, as did also a number of its component unions during the period 1930–33, partly in consequence of the severe depression of those years and partly as a result of the unfortunate policy pursued by the Communist Party, which controlled them."

One of the unions involved was the Native Laundry Workers' Union, which broke away from Communist control, "but dwindled away until it was taken in hand by Max Gordon, who reorganized it and then went ahead to organize other Native unions."

Roux observed that "Gordon's contribution to African trade unions was considerable. Though adhering to a Trotskyist political group he was nevertheless able to subordinate matters of doctrine to the practical necessities and compromises involved in organizing African workers. He trained a number of African trade union leaders, among them D. Koza, a man of considerable organizing ability and perspicacity. The most important and stable of the unions organized by Gordon was among the commercial employees, workers in the department

stores, warehouses, etc. He also reorganized the African bakers and printing workers.³³

Hirson has claimed that by 1939 there were 20,000 members of the unions which Max Gordon had organized.³⁴ At one time Gordon was secretary of four different unions. They organized a Joint Committee in 1938, and it was soon joined by three other unions, those of dairy, chemical, and general workers. According to Roux, "The last grew to be an enormous body, claiming 10,000 members in 1941."³⁵

However, by that time Max Gordon had been interned by the South African government in 1940 for almost a year. Upon his release he undertook organizing activity for African unions in the Port Elizabeth area, but he was finally forced by police harassment to abandon trade union and political activities.³⁶

Gordon had originally been a member of the Lenin Club and then of the FIOSA in Cape Town. He had gone to Johannesburg to help the efforts of the Trotskyists in that area.³⁷

With the outbreak of World War II, the Johannesburg Trotskyist movement had virtually gone out of existence. However, the Cape Town FIOSA soon sent Hosea Jaffe to try to establish a branch of that organization there, an effort which had only very modest success, and the Johannesburg branch soon broke its connection with the Cape Town organization.³⁸

Tony Southall has noted that this Johannesburg organization called itself the Socialist Workers League and proclaimed that it was "a section of the FI" (Fourth International). It published a paper in English and Afrikaans, *Socialist Action/Socialistiese Aksie*. In August 1939 it signed a joint proclamation with the Cape Town FIOSA entitled "Manifesto Against Imperialist War."³⁹

In 1942-43 a new Trotskyist group, the Workers International League (WIL), was founded in Johannesburg. A key role in establishing that organization was played by Ralph Lee, who had returned home from Great Britain, where he had been active in

the organization with that same name. The South African WIL, like its predecessor, actively sought to stimulate the growth of African trade unions.

Hirson has told the story of what happened to the WIL: "The group collapsed in 1946 and individuals who had been members (like myself) worked in small groupings, including a Johannesburg branch of the Unity Movement. We were active in these groups and some of us helped launch the movement in the 1960s which led eventually to imprisonment, and in my case to exile in Great Britain after a nine-year stay in jail."⁴⁰

After 1948 it became increasingly difficult for professed revolutionaries like the Trotskyists to carry on any open activity in South Africa. In that year the Nationalist Party, dedicated to the most extreme kind of racial segregation and apartheid, came to power and the Nationalist government became increasingly repressive towards even mild opposition among all elements of the population, and particularly to any element seeking to end the system of racial oppression.

One repressive measure was an "anti-Red Bill," which Hirson has noted "outlawed all movements which followed Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky." He added that after that there were only "a number of 'clubs,' organized by Coloureds . . . in Cape Town to continue propagating the ideas of Trotskyism."⁴¹

In 1957 a Socialist League of Africa was formed by people of Trotskyist inclination who left the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) in Johannesburg. They issued a long publication attacking the policies of I. B. Tabata, a major NEUM leader and former Trotskyist figure. Some of these people joined the Communist-dominated ANC, but within it carried on active criticism of ANC collaboration with Liberal elements. Southall has noted that the "SLA merged in 1962 with three other groups and some individuals to form the National Committee for Lib-

eration, the majority of whom were eventually imprisoned or fled the country after the police caught up with their sabotage activities."⁴²

Trotskyists in the Non-European Unity Movement and the International

By the middle 1950s there was no longer any affiliate of International Trotskyism in South Africa. However, there were a few individuals, affiliated with one or another of the factions of the protest movement against apartheid, who had contact with one or another faction of the Fourth International after 1960.

One of these was Dr. Neville Alexander, a leader of the NEUM, who travelled abroad in 1960 at which time he had contact with the Pabloite International Secretariat in Europe and the Trotskyist organization then in existence in Australia. Southall has observed that "he returned convinced that the leadership of the NEUM was failing to seize the opportunities presented by the new situation." But it seems that the strongest influences on him became the examples of Cuba and the ongoing struggles in Algeria and Vietnam. Alexander and some people associated with him were expelled from the NEUM in April 1961 and founded what came to be called the National Liberation Front of South Africa (NLF), a group oriented not towards mass organization but towards guerrilla war. It proclaimed "that the South African revolution has to advance in the form of guerrilla warfare . . . that the typical guerrilla will be an agrarian revolutionary fighting to free the land." In 1963 Alexander and ten other leaders of the NLF were arrested, putting an effective end to that organization.

Another NEUM leader to make contact with the international Trotskyist movement in the early 1960s was I. B. Tabata, a member of the original Lenin Club. Although it is not clear whether Tabata was present at the Eighth World Congress of the

United Secretariat in 1965, he was elected by that gathering to the International Executive Committee of USEC.⁴³

Tabata may have been responsible for the portion of the Eighth Congress resolution on "The Progress and Problems of the African Revolution" dealing with South Africa, which said:

The formation of a united front of forces struggling against apartheid and imperialism remains a primary necessity. . . . Revolutionary Marxists are partisans of that kind of united front and offer their active support to all those who actually struggle, no matter what their specific orientation may be. They support in particular the vanguard sectors of the South African movement which are closest to the line of the permanent revolution, and which have already succeeded, thanks to stubborn and courageous struggle, in gaining real mass influence, especially among the peasants (above all APDUSA, the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa) and the other organizations affiliated to the NEUM (Non-European Unity Movement).⁴⁴

Southall has maintained that although Tabata remained a member of the International Executive Committee of USEC until the Tenth Congress in 1974, he did so "without ever making a political report of his activities or that of his organization and without ever making any attempt to carry the line of the FI into his movement." To confirm this charge, Southall said that "Unity Movement members in Zambia for instance had never seen any of our publications during the whole of his tenure on the IEC. This despite the fact that Lusaka was Tabata's main base throughout the period." Southall concluded that this "was potentially extremely dangerous to ourselves politically because it was precisely at this time that Tabata was behaving in an increasingly dictatorial and corrupt method inside his own movement. The discredit into which he thus came could through his tenuous associ-

ation with us have rubbed off onto ourselves."⁴⁵

The United Secretariat's Ninth Congress in 1969, in its "Resolution on New Rise of the World Revolution," had a short passage dealing with South Africa that reflected the general orientation of the congress towards the endorsement of guerrilla warfare. After noting "a current increasingly inclined to guerrilla struggle in the antiapartheid movement in South Africa," and social changes which had taken place in South Africa, the resolution stated: "This can only increase the importance of the South African revolution, the only one which can base itself on a mass of workers and peasants who have been proletarianized and largely detribalized in the crucible of capitalist exploitation and apartheid oppression. The historic role of all the armed struggles now in progress on the African continent, which are slowly moving southward, is to prepare, facilitate, and spur the outbreak of the South African revolution, beginning with guerrilla warfare."⁴⁶

The Tenth Congress of USEC in 1974 made only passing reference in the "General Political Resolution" which had the support of the majority, to "a revolutionary crisis in all of Southern Africa," but dealt not at all with the specific situation in South Africa.⁴⁷ The resolution on "The World Political Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Fourth Internations," offered by the minority Leninist-Trotskyist Faction in opposition to the "General Political Resolution" had no reference at all to South Africa or even Southern Africa.⁴⁸ There is no indication that USEC or any other faction of International Trotskyism had sustained contact with any elements in South Africa after 1974.

The Continuing Influence of Trotskyist Ideas

Although Trotskyism had apparently ceased to exist as an organized movement, there is some indication that Trotskyist ideas continued to have some influence in South Af-

rica into the 1980s. As Charles van Gelderen has observed, "Most of the non-Stalinist ANC groups (including sections of the Black Consciousness movement), bear unmistakable evidence of this pervading influence. A recently published journal, *Free Anzania*, had a quotation from Trotsky on its cover and inside Trotsky's article on 'Trade unionism in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay' although without acknowledging the authorship. . . . The current antagonism to the United Democratic Front by several of the black trade unions and which has led to a split in the Media Workers of South Africa has led to discussions about 'Popular Front' vs. 'United Front' and undoubtedly Trotskyist influence is playing a part in this dialogue."⁴⁹

There is also some indication that the Morenoist tendency in International Trotskyism, the International Workers League (Fourth International), and particularly its U.S. affiliate, the Internationalist Workers Party, was seeking to establish some contacts with South Africans in the mid-1980s. Frank Puo, a representative of the Anzanian People's Organization (AZAPO), an organization deriving from the Black Consciousness Movement of the late 1970s, was interviewed by *Working Class Opposition* in mid-1985. Puo noted that Trotsky "was one of those that we have studied." He also observed that "there are several organizations that we feel share ideological perspectives and with whom we feel we could work closely. . . . At this time we cannot say this movement or that movement, but in as far as the Internationalist Workers Party is concerned, we have found very close understandings or parallels of analyzing the situation for achieving our goal which is the socialist state in South Africa and this is one movement that we can associate very strongly with."⁵⁰ However, there is no indication that any formal relationship had been established at that time between AZAPO and the Morenoists.

Spanish Trotskyism Until the Formation of the POUM

Spain was one of the few countries in which the Trotskyist movement had an opportunity during the 1930s to participate in an ongoing revolution. A priori, the opportunities for the movement seemed exceptionally favorable. It was faced during most of the period with a very small and weak official Communist Party, while its own leaders were among the most distinguished figures among the people who had established the Communist movement there in the early 1920s. Furthermore, Trotsky himself took a very active interest in Spanish developments during most of the decade.

But, long before the victory of Franco in the Civil War had resulted in the suppression for almost two generations of any revolutionary or even democratic movement in the Iberian Peninsula, Spain had become a disaster area for International Trotskyism. Largely due to Trotsky's efforts to impose upon his Spanish followers policies and tactics to which they were opposed, the official Trotskyist movement had virtually disappeared in Spain before the outbreak of the Civil War. In spite of attempts at the beginning of that conflict to reestablish relations between Trotsky and his erstwhile followers, these efforts proved fruitless. As a consequence, during the most significant European social conflict of the interwar period, a struggle in which Trotsky's ex-followers played a significant if secondary role, by 1939 official Trotskyism in Spain amounted to not more than a couple dozen people, some of whom were not even Spaniards.

Spanish Developments During the 1930's

Trotskyist writers including Trotsky himself have usually pictured "The Spanish

Revolution" as beginning virtually with the onset of the decade of the 1930s and continuing until the final victory of Franco's armies nine years later. The process began early in 1930 when King Alfonso XIII asked for and obtained the resignation of the military dictator General Miguel Primo de Rivera, who had controlled the government since seizing power in a *pronunciamento* of the armed forces seven years before.

Primo de Rivera was succeeded by General Dámaso Berenguer. In the eyes of both the King and Berenguer himself, his administration was seen as a transitional one leading to the restoration of a constitutional monarchy. To this end Berenguer called elections for a new constitutional assembly. However, before those elections could be held Berenguer was forced to resign because of rising resistance from both the civilian politicians and elements of the armed forces.

Berenguer was succeeded by Admiral Juan Bautista Aznar who, rather than proceeding with the constituent assembly elections, called municipal elections. When, on April 14, 1931, these elections produced triumphs of Republicans in most of the major cities, Alfonso XIII abdicated and fled to Paris where he remained until his death several years later.

A republic was proclaimed, constituent assembly elections, this time to write a republican constitution, were held and they produced a majority of left-wing Republicans and Socialists, who dominated the government for about two years. Left Republican Manuel Azaña served as prime minister, and leading Socialists, including trade union leader Francisco Largo Caballero and Indalecio Prieto, served in the cabinet. However, the conservative Republican Alcalá Zamora continued in the post of president which he had assumed at the time of King Alfonso's departure.

The 1931-33 period resulted in disillusionment for practically every element in Spanish politics. The anarchist labor movement, the *Confederación Nacional del Tra-*

bajo (CNT), which had been favorably disposed toward the Republic, was very unhappy with what it deemed to be the use of governmental power by Socialist Minister of Labor Largo Caballero to strengthen the rival Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), of which he was chief; the CNT soon came under the control of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI), which organized several abortive uprisings. The Socialists were increasingly disillusioned by their inability to get through the parliament (Cortes) fundamental reforms which they favored. The Left Republicans were increasingly alarmed by unrest and turbulence characteristic of that period, the worst phase of the Great Depression.

On the Right there was strong resentment at the anticlerical measures of the Republican government, and at the very mild attempt at agrarian reform by the Azaña regime. The Right also became increasingly frightened at what they conceived to be the "Bolshevism" of both the Socialist and Anarchist branches of the labor movement.

New elections were held late in 1933 and these provided a victory for the Right, largely as a result of the fact that the anarchists followed their traditional policy of boycotting the elections (as they had not done in 1931). The two major right-wing forces were the Radical Party of Alejandro Lerroux, who became prime minister, and the Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (CEDA), led by José María Gil Robles. More or less aligned with these two groups was the still tiny Falange Española, the fascist party headed by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the ex-dictator.

The Radicals dominated the government, with the tolerance of the CEDA, for approximately a year. However, by mid-1934 the CEDA was increasingly demanding entry into the government. On the other hand, the forces of the Left, particularly the Socialist Party, looked upon the CEDA as "fascists" and threatened revolutionary action if the CEDA was admitted to the regime.

When at the beginning of October 1934

the CEDA did enter the cabinet, the Socialists—together with the Catalan Left Nationalists, the Workers and Peasants Bloc in Catalonia, the tiny Trotskyist group, and at the last moment the communists—did attempt an uprising. In Catalonia, regional President Luis Companys proclaimed the "independence" of the region but surrendered to the military at its first show of force. In Madrid and most other cities of central and southern Spain, the "uprising" was confined to a general strike. Only in the northern region of Asturias did a major insurrection take place. The "Workers Alliance," composed of the Socialists, the UGT, the Trotskyists, the Communists, and the CNT (this being the only area in which the anarchists participated in the uprising), seized power throughout most of the region. It took almost two weeks for the Army—principally with the use of Moorish and Foreign Legionnaire troops led by General Francisco Franco—to suppress the Asturias revolt.

Tens of thousands of trade unionists and members of left parties were arrested following the October 1934 revolt. Many of these were sentenced to death although in most cases these sentences were commuted. But by early 1936 there were still an estimated 30,000 people in jail as a consequence of the 1934 revolt.

In the face of this situation virtually the whole of the Spanish Left became united behind one basic idea—amnesty for those jailed after October 1934. When elections were called once again in February 1936, virtually all Left groups—the Left Republican parties, Socialists, Communists, Catalan Left, Workers Party of Marxist Unity [Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista—POUM], Partido Sindicalista—joined forces in an alliance which was popularly referred to as the Popular Front. This time, the anarchists voted in large numbers for the left unity candidates.

From February until July 1936 a weak government consisting only of Left Republican parties remained in office. The Socialists refused to join the cabinet, and Francisco

Largo Caballero, leader of the strong (but not dominant) left wing of the party predicted imminent revolution. Indeed, there was a prerevolutionary atmosphere in Spain during much of this period.

The denouement of this situation was the uprising by the principal leaders of the armed forces, with the backing of the right-wing parties, the Roman Catholic Church (except in the Basque provinces), and the major agricultural, industrial, and banking interests. This took place between July 17-19, 1936, and was the commencement of the Civil War.

Participating Groups in The "Spanish Revolution"

Throughout the period between the fall of Alfonso XIII on April 14, 1931, and the outbreak of the Civil War on July 17, 1936, the overwhelmingly predominant political forces on the far left were the Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español—PSOE), and the anarchist movement. For almost fifty years they had contested control over the trade unions and over the leadership of the movement for fundamental social change in Spain. The anarchists (CNT-FAI) were predominant in Catalonia in the north-east, rural Andalusia in the south, and rural Aragón in the northeast. They were on a par with the Socialists in the Valencia region and inferior to them in most of the rest of the country. The Socialists clearly predominated in Madrid, the Basque provinces, Asturias, and the cities in most of central, southern, and western Spain.

Neither the Socialists nor the anarchists were monolithic in composition or organization. In the PSOE during the 1930s there were clearly three defined factions—the Left, led after 1933 by Largo Caballero, the Center headed by Indalecio Prieto, and the Right led by Julián Besteiro. In the years just before the Civil War the Left tended to grow rapidly, particularly among the Socialist

Youth and within the UGT, although Prieto continued to control the party machinery.

Within the anarchist ranks there was a sharp divergence during most of this period between the "syndicalists," led particularly by Angel Pestaña and Juan Peiró, who were opposed to sacrificing the union movement to will-o'-the-wisp insurreccional attempts, and the FAI, more simon-pure anarchists who believed strongly in the "power of the deed" and hence insurrections whenever and wherever possible. The FAI dominated the CNT from 1932 on and threw out the so-called "Treintista" unions under syndicalist leadership. The two elements of the CNT were not reunited until May 1936.

Communists of all kinds were a distinctly minority element in the Spain of 1930-36. The Communist Party had been established in 1919-20 by three groups. The Socialist Youth first broke with the PSOE and formed a Communist Party (PCOE); a few months later some adult PSOE leaders broke to form a second Communist Party. Under Comintern insistence the two parties united.¹ A third element, centering on Catalonia, consisted of young people who were active in the anarchist trade union movement and sought to get it to align with the Comintern. The best-known figures in this group were Joaquín Maurín and Andrés Nin.

Like most national Communist parties, that of Spain was very factionalized in the 1920s. By the early 1930s there were three recognized groups within Spanish Communism. Until shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War the largest and most influential of these was the Workers and Peasants Bloc/Iberian Communist Federation (BOC—Bloque Obrero-Campesino/Federación Comunista Ibérica). This group, headed by Joaquín Maurín, had its principal strength in Catalonia, where it had originated as the Catalan-Balearic Islands Federation of the Communist Party. It also had some following in nearby Aragón and Valencia.

The BOC was the second force in the Catalan trade union movement (although far sur-

passed by the CNT factions) as well as among the organized workers of the Valencia area. The BOC was generally aligned with the International Right Opposition, although not officially affiliated with it.²

The official Communist Party of Spain had virtually no following in Catalonia, the most industrialized part of the peninsula. It did have some organization in Madrid, Andalusia, and Asturias. At the beginning of the decade it was led by José Bullejos, under whose leadership the Communist Party set up its own tiny trade union group, in conformity with the "Third Period" dual unionism line of the Comintern at that time. In 1932 the Comintern executed a purge in the Spanish party, replacing Bullejos's coterie with a group headed by José Díaz and including Dolores Ibarruri (later to become famous as "La Pasionaria") and Jesús Hernández. With the adoption of the Popular Front line by the Comintern, the official Spanish party began to gain some ground, particularly among the Socialist Youth. Shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War, the Socialist Youth and Communist Youth merged to form the United Socialist Youth, which was affiliated to the Young Communist International.

The third element in Spanish Communism in the early 1930s was the Left Opposition, the subject of most of the rest of this chapter.

The Spanish Left Opposition

Origins

The first group of Spanish supporters of Trotsky was organized among Communists who had been driven into exile in Western Europe during the Primo de Rivera regime. These people rallied around the French Trotskyist paper *La Verité* soon after it was established in mid-1929.

The principal figure among these exiled Trotskyist sympathizers was Francisco García Lavid, who also went under the name

Henri Lacroix. He was a housepainter from the Basque area who had belonged to the Basque Federation of the Spanish Communist Party. Between 1925 and 1927 he resided in the Soviet Union, where he may have known Trotsky, but by 1929 he was active among Spanish Communist exiles in Belgium and Luxemburg.

A month or two before the fall of the Primo de Rivera regime in January 1930, García Lavid established the first groups of Spanish Trotskyites. In December 1929 the Trotskyist exiles in Belgium and Luxemburg undertook a campaign to raise funds for the publication of the first Spanish Trotskyist periodical, *Contra la Corriente*.³

Among the early recruits to this group was Julián Gómez, who usually used the name Julián Gorkin. As an exiled Spanish Communist he had been active in the French Communist Party. However, in November 1929 he was expelled from the French party because of the publication in Madrid of a translation by him of a pamphlet of Trotsky's, by a publishing house, Cenit, established by another dissident Spanish Communist, Juan Andrade. Gorkin was to remain a member of the Spanish Trotskyist group until June 1931. During this period he contributed more or less regularly to *La Verité*.⁴

Meanwhile, García Lavid had begun to correspond with political friends in Spain, urging the need to establish a Left Opposition group within the country. Among those to whom he wrote was Juan Andrade, one of the Socialist Youth leaders who had established the first Spanish Communist Party in 1919 and who for a number of years had been editor of the Communist Party's central organ until purged in the process of "Bolshevization" of the Spanish party.⁵

Andrade later wrote about the beginning of his work as a Trotskyist: "Once Lacroix and I agreed on our points of view about the crisis in the Russian CP and in the International, I began to write letters "to sound out" various comrades and friends with

whom I had remained in contact in spite of having left the Party. Almost all to whom I wrote indicated agreement on the necessity of forming an opposition group, but principally against the policy of the Spanish CP."⁶

Meanwhile, on February 28, 1930, the First National Conference of the Spanish Communist Opposition met in Liège, Belgium, with representatives of Spanish exiles from Belgium, Luxemburg, and France. According to García Lavid, all of the Spanish Communist exiles in Luxemburg had agreed to join the Opposition, as well as most of those in Belgium. They set up a Commission of Diffusion and Propaganda which set about sending out "circulars, pamphlets, periodicals, reviews, and books. . . ." The Commission also "published a manifesto which has been amply distributed and well received by the Spanish workers, in Spain and abroad. . . ." García Lavid concluded: "The results have been rapid and excellent. The bureaucrats have lost their serenity, they have vituperated us, predicted our rapid end, calumniated, denounced, and expelled us. . . ."⁷

In June 1930 the first issue of *Contra la Corriente* appeared in Liège, as the first periodical of the Spanish Left Opposition. It carried a greeting from Leon Trotsky. Apparently only two or three numbers of the periodical saw the light of day.⁸

The Early Activity of Andrés Nin

The Spanish Left Oppositionists were soon joined by the man who was undoubtedly the best known of all of them, Andrés (or, in Catalan, Andreu) Nin. Born in a provincial Catalan town in 1892, Andrés Nin had his first political experience as a Catalan Nationalist, but in 1913 joined the Socialist Party. At first a teacher, then a travelling salesman, Nin wrote extensively for the Socialist press. He was jailed during the general strike of August 1917, and soon after organized the Union of the Free Professions (Sindicato de Profesiones Liberales), which

became an affiliate of the CNT. He spent seven months in jail in 1920 during an anti-CNT lockout in Barcelona, and soon after being released was made a member of the secretariat of the National Committee of the CNT.

In April 1921 Nin was named, together with Maurín, Hilari Arlandis, and Jesús Ibáñez, to the CNT delegation to the First Congress of the Red International of Trade Unions (RILU) to be held in Moscow in July. At that congress Nin was elected to the Executive Committee of the RILU, and as a consequence took up residence in Moscow.⁹

However, the CNT, although it had voted in 1919 to join the Communist International, and in 1921 sent a delegation to the RILU congress, did not decide to remain in the Communist movement. In part, at least because of the Kronstadt Rebellion, the CNT voted in June 1921 to disaffiliate from the Comintern.¹⁰ Subsequently, it was to become the major group in an international anarchosyndicalist trade union group, the International Workingmen's Association, established in 1922.

Nin as a member of the Soviet Communist Party and a member of the Moscow Soviet, continued to play an active role in the RILU. He travelled abroad for the organization, to France, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. For a short while in 1926 he served as First Secretary of the RILU during the period of illness of its permanent secretary, A. Lozovsky.¹¹

With the intensification of the conflict within the Soviet Party Nin clearly took his place alongside Trotsky and his supporters. He became a member of the International Commission of the Opposition Center of Moscow, together with Kharitonov, Karl Radek, Fritz Wolf, Victor Serge, and the Bulgarian Stepanov.¹² At the Sixth Congress of the Comintern he came out clearly in support of the positions of Trotsky, as a consequence, he lost his position in the RILU and was expelled from the Soviet Communist Party.

During Trotsky's internal exile in Alma Ata, Nin kept in touch with him through correspondence apparently delivered through individuals who were able to visit Trotsky. In these letters Nin informed Trotsky of current developments both within the Soviet Party and in the Comintern, with particular reference to various oppositionist elements both in the USSR and outside.¹³

Finally, after being kept for more than a year under close GPU vigilance, Nin, his wife, and two daughters were deported from the USSR in the summer of 1930.¹⁴ He arrived home in Barcelona in the middle of September after a short stay in Paris, where he briefly served as a member of the International Secretariat of the Trotskyist movement.¹⁵

Nin, Trotsky, and the Maurin Group

Upon his return to Catalonia, Nin was virtually the only member of the Left Opposition in that region. At that point it seemed logical to him to try to work within the Catalan-Balearic Communist Federation headed by Joaquín Maurin. This decision undoubtedly derived in part from Nin's old friendship with Maurin, but it was also apparently due to the fact that for some months Nin felt that there was a real chance of winning the Catalan-Balearic Communist Federation in toto to the International Left Opposition.

A few weeks after arriving in Barcelona, Nin explained to Trotsky the Communist situation, particularly in Catalonia, as he then saw it. He commented on the official party that "its authority is nil." About the Maurin group he said:

Until very recently, it belonged to the official party. Its most prominent leader is Maurin. On his arrival in Spain, the Central Committee, which has never regarded this comrade favorably . . . asked him to make a declaration against 'Trotskyism' and to renounce his 'former er-

rors.' He refused to give this declaration and then was expelled. The Catalan Federation, having declared its solidarity with him, was expelled in a bloc. . . .¹⁶

I don't know whether you know that I am bound to him by a very old friendship. Maurin is very close to us and I am sure that he will end up in a short time by declaring himself for the Opposition. That would be an acquisition of great value, for as I have told you, he is very well thought of and honest. We could spoil everything if we were to attack him in a manner that was too unjustified.¹⁷

For the next year, until the open break between the two groups in June 1931, the Catalan Left Oppositionists worked largely within the Catalan-Balearic Federation and the Workers and Peasants Bloc which had been established with the merger of the Federation and the small Catalan Communist Party headed by Jordi Arquer. This collaboration caused several rather acrid exchanges between Nin and Trotsky. When Nin informed Trotsky that he had become a member of the leadership of the Catalan Federation, Trotsky wrote back that this action "disorients me a great deal. . . ." He then posed some rhetorical questions: "What has happened in the Federation? Have its chiefs changed? Has the disposition of their spirit been modified under the influence of the republican upset and of a general and sudden change of heart? Have they lost hope of reconciliation with the bureaucracy of the cr? . . ." Trotsky went on to predict that the Maurin group "will not be capable of passing the test of the revolution, and will suffer a defeat at the first opportunity."¹⁸

Trotsky was also unhappy with Nin's evident sympathy for Alfred Rosmer in the struggle which had developed between him and Raymond Molinier in the French section. Nin's biographer has noted that "his sympathies . . . were for Alfred Rosmer, and like him, he did not share the confidence which Trotsky had placed in Raymond Mol-

inier, who would be strongly criticized by Andrés Nin and the Spanish Communist Opposition a few months later. . . .¹⁹

Formal Establishment of the Opposition in Spain

In his correspondence with Nin, Trotsky kept insisting on the need for the establishment of a national Spanish Left Opposition group, even if it were a tiny one. This did not transpire until the final break between Nin and the Maurín group in Catalonia. Although that break had been underway for some time, it came out into the open on June 8-9, 1931. Maurín and Nin were invited to give talks on their political positions on successive evenings, before the Ateneo of Madrid. Francesco Bonamusa notes that "from the time they both publicly expounded their contradictory opinions, they ceased collaborating, and even greeting one another. . . ."²⁰

After several false starts the Trotskyists who had returned home after the fall of Primo de Rivera finally succeeded in launching a periodical, *Comunismo*. Its first number was dated May 15, 1931, and it was published in the northern city of Oviedo, due to the initiative of José Loredo Aparicio, the leader of the small Trotskyist nucleus in that Asturian city.²¹ It carried on its masthead the names of Andrés Nin, Henri Lacroix (Francisco García Lavid), Esteban Bilbao, Fersen (Enrique Fernández Sendon), Loredo Aparicio, Julián Gorkin, L. Siem (Luis Rastrollo), and Juan Andrade.²² Its appearance was made possible by a contribution from the French section.²³

Comunismo regularly carried serious analyses of the current Spanish political situation. It also featured historical background material, such as an article on Alejandro Lerroux, studies of regional nationalisms in Spain, and accounts of the factional struggles in the Soviet Communist Party in the 1920s. Finally, it published documents of the Spanish Trotskyist movement, such as congress resolutions and Cen-

tral Committee statements on particular situations or events.²⁴

The first issue of *Comunismo* carried three documents, a "Project for the Political Platform of the OCE," a "Project for the Trade Union Thesis of the OCE," and a "Project for an Agrarian Thesis." These were designed as fundamental statements of the Spanish Trotskyists and were to be discussed among and perhaps modified by them.

The political platform called for "reunification" of the three branches of Spanish Communism at a national conference. It analyzed the origins of the split within the Comintern, and denounced the Stalinist leadership of the CI. It proclaimed that "the International cannot be the monopoly of one fraction based on the bureaucracy, but must be the party of the world revolution of the proletariat . . . the opposition doesn't try to create a force opposed to the International but to struggle at whatever cost to reestablish the principles which defined it when it was constituted."²⁵

The trade union document similarly followed the line of the International Left Opposition. It opposed the efforts of the official Communist Party to form its own trade union central in competition with the CNT and the UGT.²⁶

The project for an agrarian thesis presented an extensive analysis of the rural situation in various parts of the country. It also called for different kinds of basic reforms corresponding to the different situations of the peasantry in the several regions. Although calling for the ultimate collectivization of the land "starting from the fundamental principle of the industrialization of the countryside," it called in the proximate future for programs designed to meet the immediate needs of the small landholder and landless agricultural laborer.²⁷

Less than a month after the appearance of the first issue of *Comunismo*, on June 7, the Oposición Comunista de España (OCE), as the Spanish Trotskyists called themselves,

held its Second National Conference in Madrid. Henri Lacroix reviewed the progress of the organization since its establishment in Liège the year before, while other delegates reported on the state of the organization in various parts of Spain. Nin spoke for Catalonia, Loredó Aparicio for Asturias, Esteban Bilbao for the Basque provinces, and Luis Rastrullo for Estremadura.

The Second Conference ratified the several basic documents setting forth the OCE's position. It also elected an Executive Committee to take the place of the Provisional Committee which had been functioning until then. The Executive Committee consisted of Henri Lacroix as Secretary General, as well as Enrique Fernández Sendón (Fersen), Juan Andrade, Agustín Lafuente, Rodolfo Usano, and perhaps Luis Rastrullo.²⁶

The OCE

Growing Differences Between Trotsky and the OCE

The OCE was formally established after its Second Congress as a national organization, as Trotsky had urged. Soon afterward, a Catalan Federation of the organization was established, something else on which Trotsky had insisted. However, in spite of these steps relations between Trotsky and his Spanish followers became increasingly tense. This was particularly the case between Nin and Trotsky, but at least until mid-1932 virtually all of the other Spanish Trotskyists tended to align themselves with Nin, not Trotsky. Different assessments of the situation in Spain, as well as disagreements about developments within the International Secretariat as a whole, contributed to the friction between Trotsky and his Spanish followers.

One issue about which there was controversy was the fate of *El Soviet*, a periodical established by the OCE in Barcelona. When financial help for the periodical, promised

by the International Secretariat and particularly by Raymond Molinier, failed to materialize, Nin reported on November 7, 1931, to Trotsky that "the governor's persecution of *El Soviet* allowed us to suspend publication in an 'honorable' manner. . . ."²⁷ Trotsky replied sharply to this, that "I find this manner of posing the question incorrect in principle. . . . To cease publishing a paper without replacing it with an illegal publication simply signifies desertion. . . ."³⁰

Trotsky from time to time offered opinions and advice on the practical political situation in Spain—advice which his followers there did not appreciate. Francesco Bonamusa has noted that some of Trotsky's observations were "removed from all political reality, especially that of Catalonia."³¹

Pelai Pages has noted with regard to Trotsky's observations on Spain that "Trotsky never undertook a profound analysis of Spanish society, or studied the social and economic infrastructure of social classes. He began with a more or less standardized characterization from Marxist theory . . . and from this characterized the other tendencies prevailing in the Spanish labor movement: Socialism, anarchism, Stalinism, etc. . . ."³² Increasingly this tendency of Trotsky to judge Spanish events in terms of a general schema rather than of the peculiar conditions prevalent in the country was to alienate his followers to the point of bringing most of them ultimately to leave the ranks of International Trotskyism.

In the 1931-32 period, differing views on events in the international movement were also a cause of dissension between Trotsky and the Spanish Trotskyists. The issue of Raymond Molinier continued to be a source of trouble. Although Molinier and Pierre Frank visited Spain on behalf of the International Secretariat, and Nin and other Spanish leaders had a good impression of Molinier at that time, they subsequently changed their views once again: Molinier made a number of promises, particularly concerning financial aid to the Spanish group, which

he did not keep. On November 7, 1931, Nin wrote Trotsky that "these promises remained thin air, and our economic situation became grave. The one directly culpable for all this is Comrade Molinier who acted with unjustifiable irresponsibility. Truly a conscious saboteur of the Opposition could not have done better than Molinier."³³

Nin (and the other Spanish Trotskyist leaders) also had disagreements with Trotsky's handling of the crisis among his German followers. In the introduction to an excerpt of the Nin-Trotsky correspondence which Trotsky himself published, he noted that "Nin accused the International Opposition of having a false policy towards Landau."³⁴

The Third Conference of the OCE

The Third National Conference of the Organización Comunista de Izquierda took place in Madrid, from March 26 to March 28, 1932. It was attended by about thirty delegates, a majority of them from Madrid but with representation also from Old Castile and León, Catalonia, Asturias, the Basque provinces and Navarre, Galicia, and Andalusia.³⁵ In addition to hearing reports from Secretary General Henri Lacroix and from the various provincial delegations, the conference devoted most of its seven sessions to a discussion of programmatic documents which were to have a profound effect on the future of the organization.

Three of these documents were of greatest importance. These were "The Spanish Political Situation and the Mission of the Communists," a resolution on electoral participation, and a "Thesis on the International Situation and Communism."

The first general political resolution traced events since the end of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, condemned the persecutions of the labor movement by the government of the Republic, and "came to the conclusion—so often cited—of the practical incapacity of the bourgeoisie to carry out

the democratic revolution." It predicted that the Left Republican-Socialist government would soon be displaced by a right-wing one led by Alejandro Lerroux. However, the resolution argued that although "the democratic revolution could only be completed by the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat," the time was not yet ripe for such an event.

The OCE resolution argued that five things were required to make the proletarian revolution possible. These were, "the demoralization of the enemy class," the elimination of Socialist influence among the peasants and most of the workers, the winning over of the most of the petty bourgeoisie, the establishment of something analogous to soviets, and "the creation of a great Communist Party." In the meanwhile, emphasis must be placed on the conquest of democratic freedoms.³⁶

The suggestion that the OCE should consider the possibility of naming its own candidates in the next general elections generated considerable controversy in the conference. Andrés Nin and Molina y Fábrega from Catalonia introduced the motion in favor of such action, but Juan Andrade and Henri Lacroix opposed it, arguing that to offer candidates separate from those of the official Communist Party would be to change the OCE from an "opposition" to a rival party to the Partido Comunista de España. The motion, nonetheless, was passed by a majority of the delegates.³⁷

The motion on "the international situation" was drawn up and adopted largely as a justification of the decision of the Third Conference to change the name of the OCE to Izquierda Comunista de España (Sección Española de la Oposición Comunista Internacional). Although not proposing the full establishment of a second Communist party in Spain or a rival to the Comintern on an international level, the resolution was very critical of the "opposition" role which International Trotskyism had maintained until that point:

The traditional attitude of the Opposition is completely insufficient in present circumstances and by persisting in it the Opposition will not succeed in being a political solution in decisive moments. Because the partial reforms obtained in the International do not modify substantially the nature of Stalinism. . . . Maintaining this point of view in a consequent manner would result in the working class being deprived of the policy of the Opposition until the total reform of the CI had been attained, while at the same time postponing—if not making impossible—the reform of the CI. . . . It is necessary that the Opposition present, in addition to its criticisms, the living example of its policy.

Pelai Pages has paraphrased the resolution's concept of how this should be done: "This can only be achieved if, in addition to linking itself intimately with the Communist International and marching together in everything possible, the Opposition is converted into an active force which puts into practice its own policy, without waiting for the International to accept it."³⁸

The Spanish Trotskyists also asked for the urgent summoning of a conference of the International Left Opposition. It urged that both the current affiliates of the International Secretariat and the dissident groups of Rosmer and Landau be permitted to attend, the dissidents being there to present their points of view, not necessarily as voting delegates. At the same time it refused to accept the insistence of the International Secretariat's representatives at the Spanish conference, Raymond Molinier and Pierre Frank, that it go on record against Rosmer and Landau.³⁹

Clearly the international resolution, together with the change in the name of the organization, seemed to move sharply away from the concept of Trotskyism as an "opposition" to the official Communist International and toward its being a completely sep-

arate and rival organization. It and the electoral resolution aroused strong protest from Trotsky.

The first public evidence of the attitude of Trotsky and those closely associated with him came from the German section. It issued a "Letter of the German Opposition to All Members of the Spanish Opposition" which was published by the International Secretariat in January 1933. That document accused the Spanish Trotskyists of seeking to set up a "second party" and a "Fourth International," and emphasized that that was against the "line" of the International Left Opposition. It added that the Spaniards were thus following the same mistaken course as Rosmer in France and Landau in Germany.⁴⁰ The Germans emphasized that the Communist Party was still "our" party and the Comintern "our" International.⁴¹

That the Germans were speaking for Trotsky became clear in a document submitted by Trotsky himself to the February 1933 preconference of the International Opposition. In that document Trotsky wrote:

On the question of *faction* or *independent party*, the Spanish Section at its last conference took an ambiguous position, to say the least, by declaring itself in favor of setting up its own list of candidates at parliamentary and other elections. This decision, which is contrary to the policy of the Left Opposition and was in no way prepared for in practice, remained a platonic but nonetheless harmful demonstration. On the road to alienation from the Bolshevik Leninists, the leaders of the Spanish Opposition went so far as to consider it possible to change the name of their organization. By assuming the name of 'Left Communists'—an obviously false name from the standpoint of theory—the Spanish comrades put themselves into contradiction with the International Left Opposition and at the same time approached the name taken by the Leninbund, the Rosmer group, etc. No serious

revolutionary will believe that such an important step was taken by accident, without a political reason. At the same time, no Marxist will approve a policy that does not openly declare its aims on principled questions, but takes refuge in diplomacy and maneuver.⁴²

The irony of this position of Trotsky is that within a matter of a few months of the publication of this document he himself came out in favor of the establishment of a Fourth International. The significance of the controversy is that it deepened the widening gulf between Trotsky and the great majority of his Spanish followers.

The Case of Henri Lacroix

Another event of the Third Conference of the Spanish Trotskyists which was to cause very considerable trouble was its decision to give Secretary General Henri Lacroix (Francisco García Lavid), on his own request, a three-month leave of absence "for reasons of health."⁴³ In fact, the retirement of Lacroix from the leadership of the group was to set off its most serious internal division. This controversy served to widen even further the breach between Trotsky and his Spanish followers.

When the three-month leave was up Lacroix refused to return to his post as Secretary General. As a consequence, in November 1932 there was a meeting of the Central Committee of the ICE which, when Lacroix again refused to return to his post, named a new Executive Committee consisting of Andrés Nin as Secretary General and L. Fersen (Enrique Fernández Sendon), Josep Metge, Narciso Molina y Fabrega, and Ergino Goni (pseudonym of Francesco de Cabo) as Administrative Secretary. It was also decided to move the headquarters of the ICE from Madrid to Barcelona.⁴⁴

Soon after this meeting Lacroix began publication of what he called an "Internal Discussion Bulletin of the Regional Com-

mittee of New Castile and the National Youth Committee." In fact Lacroix's group seems to have consisted only of himself and six other members of the local Madrid organization of the ICE: G. Munis, Ernesto Tojo, Evaristo Gil, José María Landezábal, Petra Pastor, and "Roberto."⁴⁵

Lacroix made use of funds which he had received for the ICE in his capacity as Secretary General to publish his "Bulletin." He also refused to give the new Executive Committee of the organization the list of subscribers to the periodical *Comunismo*.⁴⁶

It is by no means clear why Lacroix originally refused to continue as Secretary General of the Spanish Trotskyist organization. After the November 1932 Central Committee meeting he began to justify his break with the majority of his comrades by arguing that he had been opposed to changing the name of the organization, to its agreement to run its own candidates in some cases, and to its position vis-à-vis the International Secretariat.⁴⁷

The International Secretariat, the French section and Trotsky himself tended to align themselves more or less openly with Lacroix. They all insisted on regarding the situation as a serious factional struggle in spite of the fact that virtually the whole of the Spanish Trotskyist organization was aligned against Lacroix and with the leadership headed by Andrés Nin.

Thus, the French section, after accusing their Spanish counterparts of four "erroneous tendencies" (towards forming a second party, lack of perspective on the Spanish Revolution, ignoring the problems of the International Left Opposition, and "lack of precise policy" on trade union and agrarian matters) made proposals to "solve" the Spanish problem. According to Pelai Pages, these suggestions were "the opening of an ample political discussion, on the basis of a letter from the International Opposition to all members of the Spanish Opposition, the publication of an Internal Bulletin to assure discussion, the constitution of an interna-

tional commission of three members to participate directly in the discussion, and an enlarged meeting of the IS with the collaboration of representatives of the different currents which had become manifest in the Spanish section."⁴⁸

The attitude of the International Secretariat, with Trotsky's approval, was much the same. Over the protests of the Spanish Central Committee, the IS invited a representative of the Lacroix group—as well as of the Central Committee—to attend the preconference of the international organization in Paris in February 1933.⁴⁹

The preconference itself went on record against the Spanish Central Committee. It ordered the Spanish organization to cancel the disciplinary measures—dissolving the National Youth Committee and suspending the New Castile Regional Committee—which had been taken against the Lacroix group. It also condemned the policies of the Central Committee of the Spanish organization.⁵⁰

The Central Committee was represented at the Paris meeting by Fersen, who presented a resolution on behalf of the Spanish organization. This resolution agreed to the publication of an internal bulletin open to all members, and promised that no one would be expelled from the Spanish organization until its next national conference. However, it refused to cancel the disciplinary measures against Lacroix, and opposed the "Bolshevik-Leninist Left Communist Opposition" designation which the International Secretariat wanted to have all sections use as being "totally exotic" in the Spanish context.

This resolution also attacked the procedures of the International Secretariat. It claimed that "nothing is presented for discussion, approval has only been asked of the Spanish Section, which has been formulating criticisms of your leadership which it continues to think are justified. . . ." Thus, the Spanish section "will be faced with the necessity of renouncing without discussion

its points of view if it doesn't want to enter into violation of international discipline. The position which should be adopted as the result of discussion, is thus transformed into an ultimatum."⁵¹ The resolution ended by congratulating the international movement for having come around to the point of view on the relationship of the Opposition to the Comintern which the Spanish section had adopted, and been severely criticized for, some months previously.⁵²

The Spanish section refused to act toward the Lacroix group as the preconference had instructed it to do. Instead, it sent detailed proof of how Lacroix had used funds of the organization for his own factional purposes. In March, the Central Committee received letters of support for this position from regional groups in Asturias, Valencia, Extremadura, Salamanca, Old Castile, and the Basque country. Finally, in June 1933 *Comunismo* published this notice: "The organization is informed that its ex-secretary general Henri Lacroix (Francisco García Lavid) has been expelled from our ranks for misuse of funds."⁵³

After being expelled from the Trotskyist ranks, García Lavid unsuccessfully sought admission to the Communist Party. He was finally admitted to the Socialist Party. He was a political commissar in the Republican Army during the Civil War, and shortly before the end of the conflict was hanged a few meters from the French border by elements of the Communist Party's Lister Brigade.⁵⁴

Of the other members of the Lacroix group, G. Munis remained in the ICE. Tojo dropped out of politics entirely, and Gomila ended up during the Civil War as a member of the fascist Falange.⁵⁵

Further Polemics

The expulsion of Henri Lacroix did not end the dissidence between the ICE on the one hand and the International Secretariat and Trotsky on the other. For one thing, the International Secretariat continued to work

behind the back of the Central Committee of its Spanish affiliate, maintaining a correspondence with two people who had at first supported Lacroix but were no longer members of the organization: Arlen, a professional soldier, and Mariano Vela. It sought "their point of view on questions of the international organization."⁵⁶ Trotsky and the *is* also apparently used these two to circulate documents critical of the leaders of the Spanish section among its membership.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, Trotsky had published excerpts from his correspondence with Nin. He prefaced these with an introduction which said among other things that "Comrade Andrés Nin, who has been in permanent conflict with the International Opposition and the leaders of all the other sections, denies, at the same time, the existence of theoretical or political differences."⁵⁸ Although the Spanish Central Committee had sent the International Secretariat a letter explaining that "most of the problems with which that correspondence deals have been completely overcome," and requested that this letter be published along with the correspondence, the International Secretariat never published the letter from the Spanish organization.⁵⁹

In May or June of 1933 the Central Committee of ICE sent a long letter to the plenum of the International Secretariat which, after being postponed for some time, finally met in August. It criticized the *is* for not having supported the ICE against Lacroix even after it was in full possession of the documentation on the subject.⁶⁰ It then went on to a general accusation against the International Secretariat: "Support of indiscipline, of a struggle without principles, of individuals who don't belong to the organization for reasons of personal convenience and fear of compromising themselves (the case of Arlen), giving them participation in internal discussions; that is the policy of the *is* toward our section."⁶¹

Shortly afterward, Max Shachtman and Pierre Frank wrote a letter for the *is*, strongly

condemning the position of the Spanish Central Committee, to which the letter replied sharply. This exchange was followed by a letter from Trotsky which Pierre Broué calls a "declaration of internal war on the majority of the Spanish section."⁶²

Trotsky opened this letter with the comment that "the recent letters and documents coming from the Central Committee of the Spanish section, led by Comrade Nin, provoke a feeling that can only be termed indignation. . . . Only people devoid of any inner discipline could write this way, especially with respect to the organization—which in their deepest convictions they judge to be foreign and hostile."⁶³ After noting that the position of the Spanish section had been unanimously rejected by the recent preconference of the *is*, Trotsky attacked at length the position of Nin with regard to Rosmer and Landau, claiming that as a member of the International Bureau he had shared responsibility in the treatment of those two dissident leaders. At least, Trotsky argued, Nin should have said that "We have made such and such an error. . . ."

Trotsky then charged that Nin's behavior had greatly damaged the Spanish section: "Now, as a result of the radically incorrect policy of Comrade Nin, the Spanish section is growing not stronger, but weaker."⁶⁴ Finally, in a postscript about the reply of the Spaniards to the letter of Shachtman and Frank, he denied hiding behind them in order to attack the Spanish section, saying, "I have many times expressed myself, I hope unequivocally, on the 'politics' of Nin."⁶⁵

Andrés Nin did not reply personally to this attack by Trotsky. Rather, the answer came from the Central Committee of the Spanish section, which argued that the positions attacked by Trotsky "are not those of a particular comrade nor of a camarilla, but those of the Spanish Communist Opposition." It accused Trotsky of wanting "to eliminate Nin, laden with blame, in order to form a section of docile puppets, without any regard to quality or background, and to

say "The Spanish section has finally found the right path' . . . and everything else that is usual in these cases."

The Spanish letter said that Trotsky's letter was "a sum of empty verbalisms." It went on to add that "however great his talents and his political experience, those can produce only lamentable documents when they attempt to justify the unjustifiable and to defend the indefensible." It ended by saying to Trotsky that "the maximum responsibility falls upon you" for the dissidences between him and his Spanish followers.⁶⁶

The position of the national ICE leadership had the virtually unanimous support of the membership. In July and August the various regional groups, including that of Madrid, where Lacroix had formerly had his base, endorsed the positions taken by the Central Committee of the ICE.⁶⁷

The Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista

The Controversy Over Entrism and the POUM

For some time after this exchange relations remained relatively calm between ICE on the one hand, and Trotsky and the International Secretariat on the other. Although the Spanish section did not send a delegate to the August 1933 Plenum of the International Secretariat, it did send a letter to the meeting setting forth its points of view. It endorsed the change in orientation of the international movement which was soon to result in the call for a Fourth International and urged that the movement take the name International Communist League. It also urged the reorganization of the International Secretariat and its transfer from Paris to Brussels.⁶⁸

During the next year or more, marked in Spain by the right-wing electoral victory in November 1933 and culminating in the abortive revolutionary effort of part of the Left in October 1934, the Trotskyists played

a secondary but very active role in the organization and conduct of the Alianza Obrera (Workers Alliance). Nin signed the agreement forming the first such group in Catalonia and served on its Executive Committee. The Asturian Trotskyists also participated in the leadership of the Alianza Obrera there, while in Estremadura they were the principal group taking the initiative in establishing such an organization. These were alliances of most of the trade unions and labor-based political groups, except the CNT-FAI.

With the revolution of October 1934 the Trotskyists were also part of the movement. They helped organize a workers militia group in Catalonia, which never got to go into action, and in Asturias, where the temporary success of the revolution was greatest and the struggle lasted longest, the principal Trotskyists of the region played significant roles in the conflict.⁶⁹

It is significant to note that with the establishments of the Alianzas Obreras, the Spanish Trotskyists gave up their insistence on the need for establishing soviets analogous to those of the Russian Revolution. Pelai Pages has noted the explanation of Fersen in August 1934 that "in Spain soviets had not arisen because here there 'exist powerful organizations which have the great masses under their discipline,' and that these organizations have not renounced 'the control of their movement to create another base of struggle. Like it or not, this is a fact from which one must begin.'"⁷⁰

Many years later, Ignacio Iglesias, a major Trotskyist leader in the Asturias region, reiterated the thinking of the Spanish Trotskyists about the "soviets" issue. After noting that "For Trotsky, the establishment in our country of soviets was, then, essential. There is no revolution without soviets, he says and repeats. . . ." Iglesias observed that in Russia soviets had appeared exactly because of the lack of a trade union tradition. Iglesias added, "in Spain the situation was different since the workers were very orga-

nized, particularly unionized. . . . The Spanish worker, then, was fully represented by his union or his party. . . ."⁷¹

The defeat of the October 1934 Revolution brought all of the Marxist groups to a realization of the need for greater unity, both on the trade union and political party levels, in order to be able to fight what they all saw as a drift towards fascism in Spain. This feeling was particularly strong in Catalonia, where starting early in 1935 a series of conversations was held among the local organizations of the Socialist and Communist parties, together with the BOC of Joaquín Maurín, the ICE, and two regional parties, the Unión Socialista de Catalunya and the Parti Catala Proletari, to explore the possibility of merging them into a single party. These conversations proceeded through June 1935, although by that time only three parties were still involved: the BOC of Maurín, the ICE, and the Parti Catala Proletari.⁷² Finally, the last of these also withdrew from further discussions. It was in the end only the Izquierda Comunista Español and the Bloque Obrero y Campesino which reached agreement on the formation of a new party, the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM), which came into formal existence at the end of September 1935.⁷³

Meanwhile, international Trotskyism had entered into the period of the "French Turn," that is, "entrism" into the Socialist parties in various countries. Clearly this was not the tactic adopted by the Spanish Trotskyists, and disagreements over the issue led close to a final break with Trotsky and the international movement.

In a letter addressed to A. González, a member of the U.S. Trotskyist group who was particularly concerned with the movement in Latin America, Juan Andrade explained the evolution of the thinking of the Spanish section on entrism.⁷⁴ He noted that at a plenum of the ICE on September 15, 1934, "the point of view expressed . . . can be summed up as follows: total opposition

to the 'new course,' absolute condemnation of the erroneous policy of the IS on this question, and constitution of an organized group in the interior of the ICL grouping all the adversaries of the policy of the IS and of the turn." This position was adopted unanimously.⁷⁵

Ignacio Iglesias regarded the refusal of the Spanish Trotskyists to follow the French Turn to be the definitive break between them and Trotsky: "In September 1934 there was therefore practically formalized the break of the Spanish Trotskyists with Trotsky. The discrepancies existing on different questions had produced an undoubtedly tense situation, which reached its culmination due to the decision suddenly adopted by the old founder of the Red Army to oblige his followers to enter the socialist parties with the really illusory purpose of taking from them the working masses necessary to create new bolshevik parties and give life to the IV International. . . ."⁷⁶

After the October 1934 Revolution, when L. Fersen was jailed in Madrid where he had long conversations with Socialist Party fellow prisoners, he wrote a letter to the Executive Committee saying that he had changed his mind and urging entry into the Socialist Party.⁷⁷ However, after publication of the letter in the ICE's internal bulletin and extensive discussion of the issue, "a strong majority of the organization pronounced itself against, and for an independent organization. Our National Executive Committee took a position unanimously against this proposition" (that of the IS).⁷⁸

Subsequently, wrote Andrade, as negotiations for unity in Catalonia progressed the National Executive Committee passed a resolution endorsing unification there with the BOC but providing that elsewhere in Spain the ICE members should enter the Socialist Party. This idea was strongly rejected by the Madrid group: "The majority of our organization accepted this position, and the National Executive Committee itself, adopting the opinion thus expressed by the majority

of the militants, declared itself favorable to a new party throughout all of Spain."

Andrade noted that after that decision, Fersen, Esteban Bilbao, Munis, "and two others" in Madrid decided to enter the Socialist Party on their own. They were followed "by six to eight isolated comrades in the provinces. . . . Their departure only constituted an unimportant incident."⁷⁹

The International Secretariat, presumably seconded by Trotsky, strongly opposed the decision to form POUM. In a letter dated July 1935, the IS wrote to the Executive Committee of ICE that this would amount to "your absorption by the Workers and Peasants Bloc." It added that "if you had at least had the right to form fractions and had entered with your flag and your own ideas, the question might have been judged differently." However, the agreement reached by ICE was declared "totally unacceptable."⁸⁰

The IS letter attacked the fact that the program agreed upon by ICE did not have any specific call for the formation of the Fourth International, and allowed POUM to belong to the London Bureau. It went on to say that "our fraction could have played a very different role if it had openly entered with its Bolshevik-Leninist flag into the Spanish Socialist Party, which is the traditional party of the Spanish working class." It warned that without the ICE members inside the Socialist Left there was great danger of its being attracted to the Stalinists.⁸¹

The IS demanded that further negotiations with the BOC be suspended and a new discussion be undertaken within the ICE. It also suggested that there be a rapprochement with Fersen and the others who had entered the Socialist Party and offered to serve as intermediary for that purpose.⁸²

In their insistence that the Spanish Trotskyists enter the Socialist Party Trotsky and the International Secretariat, aside from wishing to brush aside the almost unanimous wishes of the Spaniards, overlooked another essential fact about the situation: Spanish Socialists would not have admitted

the Trotskyists under the conditions in which Trotsky wanted them to enter the PSOE. Jean Rous, sent by the International Secretariat to report on the formation of POUM, later recognized this: "It is necessary however, to note that the SP will not tolerate the B-L fraction [flags flying]. Hence the necessity for underground work."⁸³

Andrés Nin answered the International Secretariat in very energetic terms in the name of the Executive Committee of ICE. Saying that he was not surprised at the IS attitude since he knew that that body was accustomed to treating its affiliates like "pawns on a chess board," Nin noted that the idea of all ICE members entering the new POUM was not what the Executive Committee of ICE had proposed, but since "it is only the instrument of the organization, it did nothing to impose upon it the methods of bureaucratic centralism to which you are habituated, and it will dedicate all its efforts to the rigorous execution of the decisions taken by the near-unanimity of the militants."⁸⁴

Nin went on to say that it is "absolutely impossible to reopen the discussion as you propose." Were this done the members would abandon the organization. Furthermore, the IS had been kept fully aware of the progress of negotiations with BOC, and had objected only when they had been completed. He denied that ICE was being "absorbed" by BOC:

The fusion is carried out on the basis of a program elaborated *in common* as the result of a discussion which lasted for months and which contains *all* our fundamental principles: affirmation of the international character of the proletarian revolution, condemnation of the theory of socialism in one country and of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, defense of the USSR but with the absolute right to criticize all the errors of the Soviet leadership, affirmation of the failure of the II and the

III Internationals and of the necessity of reestablishing the unity of the international labor movement on a new basis. What more do you want? You should have congratulated us for the victory obtained in bringing an organization long characterized by confusion to accept our fundamental principles.

Nin also totally rejected the suggestion that the Trotskyists form a distinct fraction within the new party. He asked, "What would be the objective of a fraction in a party in which we had contributed to the elaboration of the program without forgetting a single one of our principles? In the past, we have accepted the fraction as a lesser evil. In terms of the principles, authentic Bolshevism rejects it."⁸⁵

Finally, Nin said that the entry of the POUM into the London Bureau was at the suggestion of the Spanish Trotskyists, not of the BOC. He added that they were going into the London Bureau for the purpose of propagating Trotskyist ideas, "just as the Bolshevik-Leninists have done who entered the sections of the II International."⁸⁶

In letters written many years later Joaquín Maurín presented the unification of the BOC and ICE in quite a different light from that which Nin had portrayed it in 1935. Writing to Broué on May 18, 1972, Maurín said, "The only concession which the BOC made to the ICE was the change in the name of its party."⁸⁷ He added that "I never evolved in 1934-35 towards positions defended by Trotsky and the Trotskyists. In the first place, I read the books which Trotsky published, but not the Trotskyist periodicals. That Trotsky, the Trotskyists, and I coincided in the criticism of Stalinism was natural. From that, to say that I had evolved towards Trotskyism was far off the path."

Insofar as possible affiliation of POUM with the international Trotskyist movement was concerned, "Never was there discussed in the conversations the fusion of the BOC and the International ICE, which for us

was an abortion." In a letter to Victor Alba on February 29, 1972, about this same issue, Maurín said that "the major theme was: international independence, no contacts with Trotsky. Nin agreed."⁸⁸

Extent and Strength of Trotskyists as an Independent Group

With the formation of POUM the Spanish Trotskyists disappeared, at least for the time being, as an independent group. Before tracing the further history of the Spanish Trotskyists both inside and outside of the POUM, it is useful to look at how extensive an organization they had during the 1930-35 period, when OCE and ICE had existed.

Stephen Schwartz has noted the controversy over the membership of ICE: "Accurately gauging the founding numbers of the POUM is difficult. Documents indicate a BOC membership of some 5,000, while Munis claims the ICE had 2,000 members in 1932. However, Victor Alba, a BOC and POUM member avers the ICE's figures were radically padded, and that the Trotskyists' ranks never rose above 200. A recent work by the Catalan historian Pelai Pages suggests a median for the ICE at 7-800, apparently a just estimate."⁸⁹

During their five years as a separate political organization the Spanish Trotskyites had established regional federations and local groups in widely scattered parts of Spain. One of the most important of these was always in Madrid. A number of the leading Trotskyist figures of the period lived in Madrid, including Juan Andrade, Enrique Fernández Sendon, Henri Lacroix, Luis García Palacios, and the Mexican, G. Munis. At various times, the Madrid group recruited small units of disaffected Communist Party members. The Madrid Trotskyists had at least some very modest trade union influence; thus Henri Lacroix was for a while a member of the executive of the CNT painters union, García Palacios edited publications of the UGT bank clerks union, and Emilio

Freire was vice president of the Shoemakers Section of the Leather Workers Union of the UGT. The Madrid Trotskyists had a headquarters which was the major center of the publications of the national group.⁹⁰

The Trotskyists also had groups in other parts of Castile. In December 1931 they organized the Castile-León Federation, at a meeting attended by delegates from Zamora, León, Palencia, and Salamanca. There were also at least individual members in several smaller towns of the region.⁹¹

From November 1931 onward the Trotskyists also had an organization in Catalonia. It was particularly centered in Barcelona, where Nin, Josep Metge, Narciso Molina y Fabrega, Francesco de Cabo, and other leading figures lived and worked. There were also at least small Trotskyist groups in other towns in the province of Barcelona as well as in that of Gerona. Pelai Pages has estimated that there were nearly 100 members in the ICE Catalan Federation on the eve of the establishment of the POUM.⁹²

In the Asturias region the Trotskyists had small groups in Oviedo, Gijón, and Sama de Langreo. Particularly in Oviedo individual members of the group had influence in a few of the CNT and UGT unions. Apparently no regional federation was established there, individual liaison with the national headquarters being maintained by José Loredó Aparicio in Oviedo, Armando Alonso in Gijón, and Ignacio Iglesias from Sama de Langreo.⁹³

In the Basque country there existed the Basque-Navarre Federation, founded in December 1931, with groups in Vizcaya, Navarre, Alavá, and Santander. One of their most outstanding figures was Esteban Bilbao, who had been one of the founders of the Communist Party in the city of Bilbao. One major center of the Trotskyists was in the town of Astilleros, where they had considerable influence in the local CNT Oil Workers Union.⁹⁴ Victor Alba has claimed that for a time the mayor of Astilleros was a Trotskyist.⁹⁵

There were several groups and some scattered members of the Opposition who made up its Galician Federation. These included organized units in La Coruña (the regional capital), El Ferrol, Santiago de Compostela, and several smaller towns—it is known that in 1932 there were twelve members in Marinos, ten in Hombre, and twelve in Puente-deume. Since with the outbreak of the Civil War Galicia fell almost immediately into the hands of the military insurrectionists, virtually all Galician Oppositionists were murdered by the rebels in the first days of the rebellion.⁹⁶

Extremadura was one of the major centers of strength of the Spanish Trotskyists. Particularly in and near the city of Llerena, where they led important peasant strikes in 1932 and 1933, the Trotskyists had a relatively substantial following. At the outbreak of the Civil War POUM had 230 members in the Llerena region, virtually all of whom, presumably, had come from ICE. There were smaller groups in several other Extremadura areas. Luis Rastrollo, a member of the National Executive of ICE, was the principal Trotskyist leader in Extremadura.⁹⁷ Here, too, most of the Trotskyists perished in the first weeks of the Civil War.

One of the weakest areas of the country in terms of Trotskyism was Andalusia. There were small groups in Sevilla, Algeciras, and Cádiz, but it seems doubtful that there were more than one hundred members in all that part of southern Spain. Apparently no regional federation existed in Andalusia.⁹⁸

The Trotskyists appear also to have been weak in the southeastern coastal regions of Spain, that is, Valencia, Albacete, and Murcia. The one town in which they apparently had some importance was the port of Sagunto, where it is known that they participated in formation of the local Alianza Obrera early in 1934.⁹⁹

Jean Rous, who was sent to Spain by the International Secretariat at the time of the formation of POUM, presented his estimates of the number of ICE members in various

parts of the country at the time of the merger with BOC. According to him there were about twenty members in Barcelona, 150 in Madrid, and 400 in Estremadura, where he noted that they had "real mass influence" in the Llerena region. Rous reported a group of twenty members in Sevilla; three groups, with a total of forty members in Asturias; a unit of ten in Bilbao and one of twenty in Salamanca "exercising strong trade union influence." He credited the Trotskyist unit in Astilleros with twelve to twenty members, and noted the existence of a group in Gijón. Finally, he said that in Galicia there were "other small groups of two or three comrades" in Orenza, Santiago de Compostela, and Lugo.¹⁰⁰ It seems likely that Rous underestimated ICE membership. Certainly, Victor Alba's estimate of 200 in all of Spain considerably understates the size of ICE.¹⁰¹

Spanish Trotskyism Just Before and During the Civil War

Once the POUM had been formed, Trotsky wrote that "insofar as it may depend on international factors, we must do everything to aid this party to gain in power and in authority. That is possible only along the path of consequent and intransigent Marxism."¹ However, only a few months later Trotsky was bitterly attacking not just POUM, but most particularly its ex-Trotskyist leaders.

The Break of Trotsky With the POUM

Soon after the formation of POUM new national elections were called, and the new party had to decide what position to adopt towards them. It was this issue which provoked the definitive split between Trotsky and the ex-Trotskyists in the POUM.

All other parties of the Left in Spain formed an electoral alliance which was popularly referred to as the Popular Front. During the discussion leading up to this POUM advocated formation of a "national labor alliance" of all of the labor-based parties. However, when a broader agreement among most of those parties and the middle-class republican and regionalist parties was agreed to POUM had to decide whether or not to join that alliance.

At a meeting of the Central Committee of POUM on January 5, 1936, Andrés Nin gave a report and introduced a resolution approving POUM's affiliation with what the resolution called "the labor-republican front." The resolution argued that in order to get its message adequately before the workers and the public in general it was

important for the party to have representation in parliament. This would be absolutely impossible if POUM were to run independent candidates against those of the united Left, and in addition such POUM candidacies might in some instances throw the election to rightist nominees.

Although the resolution stressed that it did not consider the election results "decisive for the general course of politics," these elections were nonetheless "highly political," because they would resolve above all "the question of amnesty." The overweening issue from the point of view of the workers, POUM claimed, was that of gaining freedom for the 30,000 prisoners still held in jail as a consequence of the October 1934 uprising. This resolution was unanimously adopted by the Central Committee of POUM. Shortly thereafter, the old Trotskyist Juan Andrade signed the document of adhesion of the POUM to the Popular Front.²

This action of his ex-followers in POUM brought a blistering attack from Trotsky. In an "open letter" which appeared in the U.S. Trotskyist periodical *New Militant* on February 15, 1936, entitled "The Treachery of the POUM," Trotsky charged that "The former Spanish 'Left Communists' have turned into a mere 'tail' of the left bourgeoisie. It is hard to conceive of a more ignominious downfall!"³ After noting that Andrade had recently sent him a book with a handwritten dedication to Trotsky as his "leader and teacher," Trotsky proclaimed that "that compels me at present to announce all the more decisively in public that I never taught anybody *political betrayal*. And Andrade's conduct is nothing else than *betrayal of the proletariat for the sake of an alliance with the bourgeoisie*." He ended this blast by suggesting that "in Spain genuine revolutionists will mercilessly expose the betrayal of Maurín, Nin, Andrade, and their associates, and lay the foundation for the Spanish section of the Fourth International!"⁴

Pierre Broué, one of the principal historians of the Trotskyist movement, has

insisted that it was the POUMist decision to become part of the Popular Front, if only temporarily, that marked the final break between Trotsky and his erstwhile Spanish followers.⁵

On various occasions, Trotsky was to refer to the POUM participation in the electoral coalition of February 1936 as a "betrayal." He apparently never knew about, or ignored, that fact that POUM regarded the Popular Front as purely an electoral alliance, involving no postelection commitments for the party. Nor did he ever take public note of the fact that on March 8, 1936, Maurín, the only POUM candidate elected in February, announced that POUM was withdrawing from the Popular Front. According to Maurín, "The main task of the proletariat today . . . is to concentrate on extraparlimentary activities. It is prevented from doing so by its alliance with the petty bourgeoisie."⁶

Trotsky's continuing bitterness was reflected in a "letter to a Spanish comrade" published in *New Militant*, May 2, 1936. At the end of this epistle, in listing the "tasks" of the "Spanish supporters of the Fourth International," Trotsky noted as the first task, "To condemn and denounce mercilessly before the masses the policy of ALL the leaders participating in the Popular Front." Their second "task" was "To grasp in full the wretchedness of the leadership of the 'Workers Party of Marxist Unification' and especially of the former 'Left Communists'—Andrés Nin, Andrade, etc.—and to portray them clearly before the eyes of all the advanced workers." Task four was "To join the Socialist Party and the United Youth in order to work there as a fraction in the spirit of Bolshevism."⁷

The POUM During the First Months of the Civil War

On July 17, 1936, the Spanish Army in Morocco seized control there, under leadership of General Francisco Franco. During the

next two days the military insurrection spread to the rest of the Spanish Republic. The revolt succeeded largely in those areas in which the civil authorities were unwilling to supply arms to members of the two major union groups and the left-wing political parties. Where the workers were able to obtain arms the uprising was suppressed, sometimes after severe fighting.

After the first week the military rebels had succeeded in gaining control of most of Andalusia in the south, including Cádiz, Sevilla, and Granada. They also were successful in Galicia in the west, and in León, Old Castile, and Navarre, centering on the city of Burgos, in the north central parts of the country. Finally, they succeeded in dominating the western half of Aragón, including the cities of Zaragoza and Huesca, as well as the island of Majorca in the Balearic Islands off the Catalan coast.

In all other parts of Spain the revolt was overcome by armed civilians, principally workers, supported here and there by elements of the police. Thus virtually the whole Mediterranean coast, including Catalonia, the Valencia region, Albacete, and Málaga, remained in the hands of the Republic. So did half of Extremadura, along the Portuguese frontier, New Castile (Madrid and Toledo), the north coast along the Bay of Biscay, including Asturias, Santander, and two Basque provinces. In the last of these areas the relatively conservative Basque Nationalist Party supported the Republic because of its promise to grant autonomy to the region, a promise fulfilled soon after the outbreak of the war.

Although most of the country stayed in the hands of the Republic at least temporarily, a social revolution occurred within the Republican area. The union groups and parties which had fought for the Republic set up de facto authorities on a municipal and sometimes on a regional level (in Catalonia, Valencia, Asturias) alongside the official organs of the Republic. At the same time the workers unions took over control

of factories, public utilities and railroads, while in many regions the agricultural workers seized control of the farms on which they worked.⁸

The POUM participated fully in both the military struggle and in the dual organs of power which were established in various parts of Republican Spain. They were particularly significant in Catalonia and also had a role of some importance in Madrid, Valencia, and in Asturias. The POUM grew very rapidly during the first months of the Civil War. Its membership rose from 6,000 to 30,000 and its press expanded dramatically. It soon had daily papers in Barcelona, Madrid, and Lérida, as well as weeklies in various cities in Catalonia and elsewhere. It opened headquarters, organized special groups of women, the youth group *Juventud Comunista Ibérica* (JCI) expanded rapidly and had its own press, including a daily newspaper in Lérida. The POUMists had important militia columns on the Aragón front, and in Madrid as well.⁹

However, POUM suffered some serious casualties during the July struggle. Joaquín Maurín, secretary general of POUM, was captured by the military insurrectionists in Galicia, where he had gone on an organizing tour, and spent the war in jail. Manuel Fernández Sendón, POUM (ex-ICE) leader in La Coruña, and Luis Estrella, Galician regional secretary of POUM (also ex-ICE), were both shot by the rebels during the first days of the revolt.¹⁰ A few weeks later POUM units in the Extremadura region, which were almost entirely of ICE origin, were destroyed when the rebels conquered that region.

In the Basque region, although the leadership of the Republican forces was principally in the hands of the Basque Nationalists, José Luis Arenillas, ex-Trotskyist and member of the Central Committee of POUM, organized the first militia column which left Bilbao to confront the military rebels. A medical doctor by profession, he became head of the Medical Corps of the Basque Army and military health inspector of the

Republic's Army of the North. In August 1937 he was captured by the Franco forces, and was executed in March 1938.¹¹

The principal importance of POUM was in Catalonia. There it participated in the Central Committee of Antifascist Militia, the regional dual power established right after the suppression of the rebellion, and POUM took over virtual control of the city of Lérida.¹² When, in September 1936, the Central Committee was abolished and representatives of the groups which had belonged to it joined the official Catalan government, Andrés Nin became Catalan Minister of Justice.

During the period before POUM entered the official government of Catalonia Nin and some other POUM leaders frequently spoke in terms of Trotsky's ideas of permanent revolution. An example of this was Andrés Nin's speech at a meeting of POUM in Barcelona on September 6, 1936: "The working class of Catalonia and the working class of Spain doesn't struggle for the democratic republic . . . all these concrete objectives of the democratic revolution have not been carried out by the liberal bourgeoisie . . . but by the working class, which has resolved them in a few days, with arms in its hands. . . . The working class has resolved all the fundamental problems of the democratic revolution. . . . On July 19, comrades, Spanish feudalism, clericalism, and militarism were destroyed . . . as well as the capitalist economy."¹³

The idea of POUM entering the official government of Catalonia provoked some opposition within the party. The leaders of the JCI did not favor the idea, and Narciso Molina y Fabrega also opposed it. However, when the vote was taken in the POUM Central Committee, entry into the government was supported unanimously—any continued strong opposition to the idea might well have resulted in a split.¹⁴

In retrospect, Juan Andrade wrote in *La Batalla* that the POUM's experience of "collaboration" in government had been "en-

tirely negative and even noxious from the point of view of the development of the revolutionary process."¹⁵ However, as Broué has noted many years later, "Juan Andrade, in recalling it, insisted above all on the consequences which would according to him have followed from the refusal of governmental collaboration: isolation of the POUM, facilitating the Stalinist efforts for their suppression, the loss of rights and material advantages for the militiamen—the 'possession' of militia being of the criterion for 'recognition' of an antifascist party—the danger of being forced quickly into illegality in a situation on which the POUM felt that it was for it and for the revolution more than ever vital to be able to address the masses."¹⁶

From the beginning, POUM was subject to unrelenting opposition from the official Communists. In Catalonia, after the first days of the Civil War they were represented by the Partido Socialista Unificado de Catalonia (PSUC), the result of a merger of the local federations of the Socialist and Communist parties and the Unión Socialista de Catalunya and the Parti Catala Proletari. The PSUC was affiliated with the Comintern.¹⁷

The PSUC, objected to the presence of the POUM in the Catalan government. But until the Soviet Union began substantial shipments of arms to the Republic the PSUC, whose popular support was quite limited, had very little leverage. However, Soviet aid began in October when a Soviet consul, Antonov-Ovsenko (an ex-Trotskyist), appeared in Barcelona. By December, PSUC, with the direct help of Antonov-Ovsenko, had succeeded in provoking a "crisis" in the Catalan regime which resulted in the ouster of the POUM from the government. Thereafter, PSUC mounted an unceasing and scurrilous campaign against POUM, increasingly picturing them as "allies of Franco."¹⁸

The objectives of the Stalinists in their attacks on POUM were quite clear. They attacked it not only because it was a dissident Communist movement but also because in

the beginning they did not feel strong enough to attack the other much more powerful groups which stood in the way of the Stalinists' gaining complete dominance within not only Catalonia but the whole of Republican Spain. These two groups were the CNT-FAI and the left-wing Socialists led by Francisco Largo Caballero.

At the time of the exit of POUM from the government of Catalonia on December 16, *Pravda* made quite clear the meaning of the Stalinists' success in forcing POUM out: "In Catalonia has begun the elimination of the Trotskyites and anarchosyndicalists, it will be carried to completion with the same energy as was used in the USSR." Thereafter the Stalinists continued their drive to totally destroy POUM. The party was virtually outlawed in Madrid after the establishment of the Junta of Defense there when the Franco forces came to the gates of the city, the Junta largely dominated by the Communists. Juan Andrade wrote in *La Batalla* about the significance of the Madrid situation: "The plan is general for all Spain, and in Barcelona as in Madrid it is carried out in stages: first against us, because we are judged weaker, then against the CNT. . . ."¹⁹

The growing persecution of POUM and anarchists in Catalonia reached a climax early in May 1937 when the Communist-led police attempted to seize some of the key posts still held by the CNT. This provoked three days of street fighting, "the May Days," which ended only after intervention of the CNT members of the Spanish government, who appealed to their followers to lay down their arms. When the anarchists agreed to do so, POUM had little choice but to do the same.

Shortly after the end of the May Days most of the top leaders of POUM were arrested and the party was outlawed. Because of his refusal to authorize these actions, Francisco Largo Caballero, leader of the Socialist UGT, was forced out as prime minister of the Republican government, which from then on was dominated by pro-Stalinist elements.

The culmination of the persecution of the POUMists was a public trial in October 1938 of the principal leaders of the party—except for Andrés Nin, who had been murdered by Stalinist-controlled paramilitary elements. The POUMists usually referred to this trial as "The Moscow Trial in Barcelona." Most of the more serious charges—of conspiracy with the Franco forces, etc.—were dropped, but the POUM leaders were nonetheless "convicted" of less serious ones and were sentenced to long periods in prison. However, when Franco's troops were about to overrun Barcelona they succeeded in getting out of prison, and most of the POUM leaders were able to get to France.²⁰

POUMist Internal Politics and the CNT-FAI

During this period there existed sharply divergent tendencies within POUM. At one extreme were the Madrid group of the party made up almost totally of ex-ICB members, which had pictures of Trotsky in their headquarters and carried his portrait in a parade greeting the arrival of Soviet ambassador Rosenberg in the Spanish capital. At the other extreme was the Valencia regional section headed by Luis Portela, which openly supported the idea of the Popular Front, was critical of the "Trotskyites and Trotsky sympathizers" in POUM's ranks and continued to urge the merger of all "Marxist" parties even as the Stalinist persecution of POUM intensified. The POUM in Catalonia was somewhat in the center between these extremes, and ex-Trotskyists and ex-BOC members working reasonably well together.²²

During the difficult months between September 1936 and May 1937, the POUM leaders were virtually unanimous in their conviction that the only hope for saving the revolutionary conquests, particularly in the Catalan-Aragón-Levante region, was for the CNT-FAI to assume leadership in the resistance to the attempts of the Stalinists, backed by the middle-class parties and one

faction of the Socialists, to destroy those conquests. They spent much of their time and energy in trying to explain to the CNT-FAI leaders what was going on and getting them to act against it. Clearly the anarchist leaders did not wake up until it was too late.

Only about two weeks before the May Days, Andrade explained in *La Révolution Espagnole*, the French-language bulletin of POUM, the party's position with regard to the CNT-FAI. He wrote:

One can say that the future course of the Spanish revolution depends absolutely on the attitude which the CNT and the FAI adopt and the capacity that their leaders show to orient the masses they influence. The existing possibility for the revolutionary Marxist party (POUM) to convert itself into a great party of masses which acquires hegemony in the revolution is limited by the existence of anarchism, with all its history of great struggles and sacrifices. The worker presently disenchanted with the democratic tendencies of the Socialists and the Communists has more inclination to join a powerful organization like the CNT and the FAI, that externally adopt radical positions even if they don't come to translate them into action, than to enter a minority party which is faced with all kinds of material difficulties. The workers already in the CNT do not, in general, feel the need to abandon it to enter the revolutionary Marxist party, because, comparing the strongly revolutionary positions of the CNT-FAI with the simple democratic ones of socialism and Stalinism, they believe that in the tactics and policy of their organization is the guarantee of a consequent development of the revolution toward a socialist economic structure.

Andrade then delivered a sidesweep at Trotsky and his followers, without naming them: "In this sense, all those who have a narrowly sectarian, schematic conception that a minority with a correct policy can convert itself rapidly into a determining

force, have precious lessons to learn from Spanish events."

Finally, Andrade argued that "the most imperious necessity is the constitution of a revolutionary front between the two most advanced proletarian organizations: POUM and the FAI. . . . The difficulties which our revolution present to the rapid development of a great party of masses which assumes effective direction of the struggle, can be resolved in great part by the establishment of the revolutionary front between organizations."²¹

Trotsky and the Ex-Trotskyists of POUM During the Civil War

At the beginning of the Civil War there seemed to exist a possibility of a rapprochement between Trotsky and his ex-followers in POUM. Broué has noted that "Trotsky did not forget the past disagreements, the incidents with Nin, the signature of an electoral program with the left parties. But the revolutionary situation which had just been created in Spain demanded audacity and great efforts to advance on the path of revolutionary organizations. As it was, the POUM, according to him, could be won over, if it was aided, and become a powerful factor, both for the victory of the proletarian revolution in Spain, and for the construction of the IV International."²³

In pursuance of this hope the International Secretariat dispatched one of its members, Jean Rous, to Barcelona, where he arrived on August 5. His contacts with Nin and others were "cordial." The POUM leaders suggested that Trotsky come to Catalonia, and agreed in the meanwhile to accept articles by him for publication in *La Batalla*. They also accepted the is offer of "political, material, and technical support."

When Trotsky was informed of these proposals he wrote a letter to Rous, which apparently was never received by him, welcoming them. He told Rous that it was necessary to "forget past disagreements" and sincerely to seek means of working to-

gether. "He extended his hand to Nin and Andrade, while counselling them particularly to seek the support of the anarchist combatants, whose role was decisive in the war and the revolution."²⁴

But soon after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War Trotsky was immersed in the personal problems arising from Soviet pressure on the Norwegian government, which resulted in his being placed virtually under house arrest for several months before he was allowed to go to Mexico. Also, his attention was largely concentrated on the problem of defending himself against the charges made against him in the Moscow Trials. He found it very difficult to keep abreast of Spanish events, and was unable to correspond with the people there.

By the time Trotsky was again able to comment publicly on Spanish affairs, early in 1937, POUM had already had its short and unhappy experience in the government of Catalonia, and the Stalinists were mounting increasingly intensive pressure for POUM's total suppression. Trotsky's comments on the situation gave POUM little support.

On February 19, 1937, Trotsky gave an interview in Mexico to a correspondent of the Hevas news agency. In it, after citing "POUM's error" of participating in the February 1936 election coalition, Trotsky commented that "the leadership of the POUM committed the second error of entering the Catalan coalition government; in order to fight hand in hand with the other parties at the front, there is no need to take upon oneself any responsibility for the false governmental policies of these parties. Without weakening the military front for a moment, it is necessary to know how to rally the masses politically under the revolutionary banner."

After noting the Stalinists' slogan of "first military victory and then social reform," Trotsky said, "I consider this formula fatal for the Spanish revolution. Not seeing the radical differences between the two programs in reality, the toiling masses, above

all the peasants, fall into indifference . . . audacious social reforms represent the strongest weapon in the civil war and the fundamental condition for the victory over fascism."²⁵

In these comments Trotsky ignored the "social reforms," not to mention social revolution, which had taken place at the onset of the Civil War, and that POUM's problem was one of trying to resist as efficaciously as possible the onslaught on these reforms—in which the anarchists had had the leading role in much of Spain—launched by the Stalinists.

Shortly thereafter, in a letter written to U.S. Trotskyist Harold Isaacs, Trotsky went further: "It is necessary to open up an implacable campaign against the bloc with the bourgeoisie, and for a socialist program. It is necessary to denounce the Stalinist, Socialist, and Anarchist leaders precisely because of their bloc with the bourgeoisie. . . . It is a question of marshalling the masses against their leaders, who are leading the revolution to complete destruction. . . ." Then, after commenting on the growth of POUM membership, he added, "But 20,000, or even 10,000, with a clear, decisive, aggressive policy, can win the masses in a short time, just as the Bolsheviks won the masses in eight months."²⁶

Late in March 1937 *La Lutte Ouvrière*, a French Trotskyist periodical, carried an article by Trotsky criticizing its publication of a translation of an article from *The Spanish Revolution*, POUM's English-language periodical: "I can't conceal from you that your solidarity not with the struggle of the workers of the POUM but with the policy of its leadership seems to me not merely an error but crime against which I shall publicly protest with all my strength."

Trotsky then turned to denouncing POUM and the policies it had followed. He asked, "How and why did Nin come to be minister of that 'bourgeois nonrepublic'? Did he openly recognize his error, which to tell the truth was a betrayal? Instead of playing the

vaudeville role of minister of the bourgeois nonrepublic, it was necessary to mobilize the workers, courageously, openly, for the purpose of driving out the bourgeois ministers and making it possible to replace the Socialist and Stalinist ministers. Instead of this unrelenting work in and through the masses, they write ambiguous articles on the necessity of taking a position for the workers state."

After labelling Nin "the Spanish Martov," Trotsky concluded with a blanket indictment of his former Spanish followers:

For six years Nin had made nothing but mistakes. He has flirted with ideas and eluded difficulties. He has impeded the creation of a revolutionary party in Spain. All the leaders who have followed him share the same responsibility. For six years they have done everything possible to subject this energetic and heroic proletariat of Spain to the most terrible defeats, and in spite of everything the ambiguity continues. They do not break the vicious circle. They accommodate themselves to it and then, to make up for it, they write articles on the proletarian revolution. Such wretchedness! And you reproduce that with your approbation instead of flaying the Menshevik traitors who cover themselves with quasi-Bolshevik formulas.

It was not until after the murder of Andrés Nin by the Stalinists that Trotsky relented, at least a little, in his denunciations of him and his party.

The members of the POUM fought heroically against the fascists on all fronts in Spain. Nin is an old and incorruptible revolutionary. He defended the interests of the Spanish and Catalan peoples against the agents of the Soviet bureaucracy. That was why the GPU got rid of him. . . . Quite apart from the differences of opinion that separate me from the POUM, I must acknowledge that in the struggle that Nin

led against the Soviet bureaucracy, it was Nin who was right. He tried to defend the independence of the Spanish proletariat from the diplomatic machinations and intrigues of the clique that holds power in Moscow. He did not want the POUM to become a tool in the hands of Stalin. He refused to cooperate with the GPU against the interests of the Spanish people. This was his only crime. And for this crime he paid with his life.²⁷

The International Secretariat and the POUM

During the period in which Trotsky was more or less out of contact with Spanish affairs, and was unable to comment upon them, relations between the ex-Trotskyists of POUM and the International Secretariat deteriorated rapidly. This was partly the result of feuds among foreign Trotskyists who came to Spain, and partly of disagreements of the International Secretariat with policies followed by POUM.

At the time of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War there was already resident in Barcelona an Italian Trotskyist leader, Nicola di Bartolomeo, who went by the party name Fosco. He had been expelled from France early in 1936, had fled to Catalonia, been arrested, and then been freed due to intervention by POUM leaders. He had been charged by the POUMists with dealing with foreign sympathizers who came to Spain with the outbreak of the war.

As we have noted, within three weeks of the outbreak of the war the International Secretariat dispatched Jean Rous as its representative in Spain. In spite of preliminary success in developing a rapprochement with the ex-Trotskyist leaders of POUM, this success did not last long. Rous's position was soon complicated by the arrival of Raymond Molinier who, an ally of Fosco, came for the purposes of fostering his own factional interests within the International. Rous finally insisted that Molinier return to France

so as to avoid rupturing the efforts to establish better relations between the POUMists and Trotsky, with whom Molinier was then feuding.

On Fosco's recommendation, Andrés Nin invited Kurt Landau to come to Barcelona. Landau took a strongly anti-Trotskyist position. He discouraged Nin from accepting an offer of Leon Sedov, Trotsky's son, to come to Spain to join the POUM militia. Broué has noted, generally, that "the Bolshevik-Leninist elements arriving from abroad complicated the task of the representative of the IS, often sectarians, they offered summary judgments on the POUM, repeating the severe appreciations of Trotsky . . . read lessons to the militants of POUM about their combat and their party."

The Belgian Trotskyists who arrived with a letter from Victor Serge wanting nothing to do with those from the French POR. For their part, the Italian Trotskyists who came brought with them their own disputes.

All of this aroused resistance within POUM itself. Old-time BOC members, particularly the very anti-Trotskyist ones from Valencia, protested against the supposed influence of foreign Trotskyists within the POUM in Catalonia.²⁸

Julián Gorkin expressed the unhappiness of the POUM leaders with representatives of the International Secretariat who were sent to Spain. Writing in *La Batalla* on April 26, 1937, he commented that "the representative today of the Fourth International in Spain, within two hours of arriving, and a quarter of an hour of talking with us, drew from his pocket a program prepared a priori, giving us advice concerning the tactic that we ought to apply. Courteously, we advised him to take a walk through Barcelona and to study a little better the situation. This citizen . . . is the perfect symbol of Trotskyism: of a sectarian doctrinairism, of a great sufficiency, certain that he possessed the revolutionary philosopher's stone."²⁹

The situation was further complicated by the inability of the POUM leaders, particu-

larly Nin, to obtain permission for Trotsky to come to Catalonia. Although there was some opposition to the idea within the Executive Committee of the POUM, that body did authorize him to make a formal proposal to the Catalan cabinet. He did so shortly before the POUMists were forced out of the government, but, aside from Nin's vote, it was unanimously rejected. Victor Alba has reported that Soviet Consul General Antonov-Ovsenko threatened Catalan President Luis Companys that if Trotsky were admitted, Spain would receive no more arms aid from the Soviet Union.³⁰

Although the problems involving foreign Trotskyists were an impediment to real rapprochement between the International Secretariat and the POUMist ex-Trotskyists, Broué has noted that "the incidents which multiplied are significant of a much more profound phenomenon, as is attested by the letters and reports of Jean Rous from Barcelona and Moulin from Madrid; the entry of the POUM in the Economic Council, the progressive integration of the Central Militia Committee into the orbit of the Generalidad, seemed to them disquieting indications of an orientation towards a policy of the Popular Front, and brought a resurgence of the old distrust and ancient quarrels." An effort by Juan Andrade to get POUM to consult with the IS about the issue of entering the Catalan government was turned down by the other POUM leaders: "Others, on the contrary, pushed to cut as quickly as possible all compromising connections" with the International Secretariat.³¹

Once POUM had entered the Catalan government, virtually all hope of friendly relations between POUM and the IS disappeared. Yet the complete break of the POUM leaders with the International Secretariat and with Trotsky himself did not lessen the vehemence with which the Stalinists continued to attack the POUMists as "Trotskyistes." Typical was an article of Mikhail Koltzov, *Pravda's* correspondent in Spain who, writ-

ing about POUM in January 1937, claimed that "Trotsky still manages to find some collaborators. But the kind of men that go with him are already well known, all omnious and criminal elements; all scums of humanity come to his call for infamous and criminal actions. These men find him, and he finds them."³²

Reorganization of "Official" Spanish Trotskyism

During the Civil War the handful of "loyalist" Trotskyists in Spain attempted to reestablish their organization. As the friendly relations between the International Secretariat and the POUM leadership which developed immediately after the outbreak of the war began to cool, the first move seems to have been taken in August 1936 to bring together in an organization some of the foreign Trotskyists who were there by that time.

It was not until October 1936, with the return to Spain of G. Munis from Mexico, bringing with him a small shipment of arms from that country, that a formal Trotskyist group was reestablished. It consisted at that point principally of foreigners, with a few Spaniards as well.

In November, the reestablished Trotskyist group officially asked to be admitted to POUM as an organized faction. Andrés Nin replied that the party would not admit any organized faction, and that the Trotskyists would only be admitted in any case if they would repudiate the attacks by then being made on POUM by the International Secretariat.

In February 1937 the new Trotskyist group issued the first number of the *Boletín de la Sección Bolchevique-Leninista de España (Iva Internacional)*. On April 5, 1937, there appeared the first number of *Voz Leninista*, which carried the legend "Organ of the Bolshevik-Leninist Section of Spain [For the IV International]." *Voz Leninista* continued to appear rather precariously (and

after May 1937 illegally) during much of the rest of the war.³³ In April 1937 the Bolshevik-Leninists once more applied for admission to POUM. Again they were turned down.³⁴

Not only did POUM not allow the entry of the "Bolshevik-Leninists" into their ranks, they expelled a number of people for allegedly being Trotskyists. These expulsions took place not only behind the lines, but also from the POUM militia units on the Aragón front.³⁵ Paul Thalmann, a Swiss Trotskyist who fought with the POUM militia, even alleged many years later that the POUMists had executed some Trotskyists.³⁶

At the time of the May Days the Bolshevik-Leninists issued a pamphlet calling on the rebellious workers to continue their struggle until they had seized power once again. Reportedly this pamphlet was widely distributed among the workers on the barricades.³⁷

Writing about a year after the May 1937 events, U.S. Trotskyist Felix Morrow put forth what may be presumed was the official Trotskyist analysis of what should have been the policy of POUM, CNT, and other Spanish revolutionaries at the time of those events. He wrote that "the specific conjuncture in May 1937 was sufficiently favorable to enable a workers' Spain to establish its internal regime and to prepare to resist imperialism by spreading the revolution to France and Belgium and then wage revolutionary war against Germany and Italy, under conditions which would precipitate the revolution in the fascist countries. This is the only perspective of the revolution in Europe in this period before the next war, whether the revolution begins with Spain or France. Whoever does not accept this perspective, rejects the socialist revolution."³⁸

Morrow also argued that in the period following the May Days, "Only the small forces of the Bolshevik-Leninists . . . working under the three-fold illegality of the state, the Stalinist and the CNT-POUM leadership, clearly pointed the road for the work-

ers. Not only the ultimate road of the workers' state but the immediate task of defending the democratic rights of the workers. That the CNT masses could be aroused was shown by the protection they accorded Bolshevik-Leninists distributing illegal leaflets. . . ."³⁹

The German Trotskyist periodical *Unser Wort* echoed Morrow's argument a year later, saying, "Once again, a revolutionary party had a magnificent opportunity to join the rising revolutionary movement, to drive it forward and lead it to victory. But while the leading anarchists placed themselves right from the start on the other side of the barricades, the POUM joined the movement only to hold it back. In this manner victory was presented to the Stalinist hangmen."⁴⁰

The anarchosyndicalists, in reply to the Trotskyist argument about the events of May 1937, stressed the utopian nature of the argument. One anarchosyndicalist writer, known as "Senex" and described by Burnett Bolleten as "one of the principal foreign defenders of anarchosyndicalist policy during the May events," replied specifically to Morrow's arguments: "That the workers supported by the CNT units stood a good chance of victory in the case of this new civil war, can be readily granted. But this would be a Pyrrhic victory at best, for it is clear that a civil war behind the front lines resulting in the demoralization of the front and the withdrawal of the troops for the participation in this new civil war would open wide the gates to the triumphant sweep of the fascists."

Senex also ridiculed Morrow's argument that a CNT-POUM victory in Catalonia would have been the spark to light the European social revolution:

No one with the least knowledge of the situation will say that . . . the French and British masses of people were ready to go to war for the sake of Spain. . . . In order to do full justice to the profundity of such a statement, one has only to bear in mind

that almost half of the French proletarian organizations are under the thumb of the Stalinists and the rest are swayed by the socialists. . . . How could a civil war waged against the socialists and the Stalinists of Spain in the face of the terrific danger of a fascist breakthrough at that, fire the socialist- and communist-minded workers of France to the extent of having them lay down an ultimatum to their own bourgeoisie demanding arms for the anarchist workers of Catalonia?⁴¹

G. Munis, in his history of the Spanish Revolution, which first appeared in 1948, repeated almost verbatim Morrow's perspective of the revolutionary potential throughout Europe had the Catalan workers seized power in the May Days.⁴²

Erwin Wolf was sent by the IS as its special delegate to Spain to establish contact with the Bolshevik-Leninists after the May Days. He reported back that the POUM was in great disarray, and that the official Trotskyists themselves were much split, and tended to be very sectarian and abstract in their appeals to the workers. His efforts to rebuild a Trotskyist movement bore little fruit. Shortly before Wolf was going to return to France at the end of July, he was arrested—he was never heard of again, one of the many casualties of the "Stalinist terror against all those whom they could not reduce to serenity."⁴³

Like the principal leaders of POUM, those of the Bolshevik-Leninists were also put on trial by the Juan Negrín government. They were charged with a great variety of political offenses, including illegal publication of *Voz Leninista*, participation in the May events, struggle against a united workers front to overthrow the Negrín government. They were also accused of plotting "the assassination of Negrín, Indalecio Prieto, Juan Camorera, La Pasionaria, and others, sabotage and disruption in the rearward to favor the victory of Franco, espionage for the enemy, and, as an experiment, assassination of a

Russian captain." The prosecutor asked for the death penalty for G. Munis, as well as two associates, Fernández and Carlini. Munis was severely tortured. Munis noted many years later that "if he didn't see his wish fulfilled that was due principally to his not finding in us, as in the Moscow Trials, complacent capitulators."⁴⁴

At the time of the uprising in Madrid in March 1939 against the Communist-dominated government of Negrín, the international Trotskyist movement threw its support behind the Negrín government and the attempt by at least some elements of the Communist Party to resist the new Defense Junta set up by General Miaja with the support of the anarchists, Socialists and Republicans. Their analysis was that this was a coup engineered by the British in particular, to bring an end to the Civil War, and that it in fact had the connivance of Stalin who, already engaged in negotiations with the Nazis, was anxious to have the Spanish conflict liquidated.

Broué has expressed doubt as to whether there were any Trotskyists left in Spain by that time.⁴⁵ However, Ignacio Iglesias, a one-time ICE and POUM leader, has cited a pamphlet of the time published by the French Trotskyists and written by a Pole, Borten, who wrote under the name of Casanova, which would seem to indicate that there were still a few, and to state their position. Borten-Casanova wrote, "Although we hold the Communist leaders responsible for the *pronunciamiento*, we declare that the duty of all honorable workers—and of the Bolshevik-Leninists who have the pretension of being their vanguard—is to struggle with arms in hand alongside the workers and Communist militants. . . . We cannot remain neutral in the conflict which bloodies Madrid at this moment. We take sides. We are with the Communist combatants against the traitors of the Defense Junta."⁴⁶

Certainly, the official Trotskyists were a tiny handful during the Civil War. Although no accurate figures are available, it is doubt-

ful that they amounted to more than two or three dozen, including a few who were still working within POUM. They had small groups in Barcelona, Madrid, and at the Aragón front.

Conclusion

There can be little doubt about the fact that Leon Trotsky focused on Spanish events between 1930 and 1939 through the spectacles of the Russian Revolution of 1917. He had almost no personal contact with his followers in Spain except through correspondence, and had never been a particularly close student of Spain or its labor and revolutionary movements. Therefore, in judging Spanish events, personalities, and groups, he fell back upon his general theoretical schema patterned after his view of Russian events after February 1917. The consequence was that Trotsky's advice and instructions to his Spanish followers seemed increasingly unrealistic and irrelevant.⁴⁷

Trotsky seemed to ignore to an amazing degree the hold which the traditional trade unions and political organizations had on the loyalty and imagination of the workers of Spain. This was particularly the case with regard to the anarchosindicalists of the CNT. Usually Trotsky referred to the CNTistas only in passing, and seemed to regard them more or less as a carbon copy of the Mensheviks, particularly during the Civil War.

This led him to postulate from 1930 on the need for establishing soviets in Spain. For some years his Spanish followers went along with this notion, but L. Fersen undoubtedly spoke for the great majority of them when he finally pointed out that Spanish and Russian conditions were fundamentally different. The soviets had arisen in Russia largely because of the absence of well-established trade unions and mass-based workers parties; whereas in Spain there existed strong trade unions and political organizations with which several generations of workers had been affiliated, and

which both exerted discipline over their own followers, and were not at all ready to get out of the way to make room for some new type of workers organization.

The Spanish Trotskyists saw in the *Alianzas Obreras* an indigenously Spanish form of united front of the workers organizations which could both fight immediate political and economic battles and be the fount of revolution and of postrevolutionary reorganization of Spanish society. As a consequence, the Spanish Trotskyists came overtly to repudiate the idea of soviets, an institution to which Trotsky was to remain loyal until the end of his life (and his orthodox followers for nearly a half century after that).

Trotsky's utter rejection of political "class collaboration," again with its roots in the history of the Russian Revolution, led him to other violent quarrels with his (by then) ex-followers just before and during the Civil War. It led him to denounce *POUM* unmercifully for participating in even a limited way in the electoral coalition of 1936, ignoring completely the fact that almost without exception the labor movement as well as the country's revolutionaries supported that coalition as the means for obtaining amnesty for those jailed after the October 1934 Revolution. Also, he apparently totally ignored the fact (or was ignorant of it) that *POUM* had withdrawn from the coalition a few weeks after the election, a fact announced by Joaquín Maurín in the Chamber of Deputies.

Again, seeing through the prism of the Russian Revolution led Leon Trotsky to demand of his former comrades in Spain that they behave during the Civil War as the Bolsheviks had behaved in Russia in 1917. But the conditions of the two countries were entirely different.

Trotsky seemed to ignore the fact that whereas the Bolsheviks could win a vast following in agitation against an increasingly unpopular war, the *POUM*, the anarchists, and others on the far left in Spain between 1936 and 1939 were faced with the

quandary of having to support the continuation of the war under circumstances which (given the growing Communist Party influence) probably meant their own utter extermination even if victory went to the anti-Franco forces.

Ignacio Iglesias has noted Trotsky's grave error in disregarding the importance of the issue of winning the Civil War to the great majority of all working-class unions and parties in Republican Spain:

It was not just a question of preventing greater evils, but also and above all of not having useless confrontations with the working-class masses, for whom, in the end, one fact was more important than all political considerations: the war, that is to say, the struggle against the troops of the enemy Army. Some people forgot a particular circumstance: a war was going on and for the majority, the principal issue was to win it. To affirm, as Trotsky wrote more than once, that from the moment that the workers and peasants were not absolute masters of their destiny, they had little to choose between Franco and Largo Caballero was an aberration which was undoubtedly the fruit of the purest and most sterile schematism.⁴⁸

Trotsky also seemed to ignore the fact that the Bolsheviks could make great progress in winning the adherence of the peasants by a call for agrarian reform, but in Spain the peasants under anarchist and Socialist leadership had seized the land in the first days of the Civil War. Similarly, he seemed to give no recognition to the fact that the workers in Catalonia and many other parts of Republican Spain had seized control of their factories, railroads, and utilities the day the military revolt had been suppressed.

To a large degree, therefore, the workers organizations in Spain—whether anarchists of the *CNT-FAT*, *POUM*ists or left-wing Caballero Socialists—were faced with the problem of how to defend the revolutionary con-

quests they had made during the first days and weeks of the Civil War. Their choices were difficult in the extreme. They may have erred from time to time, although it is by no means clear that alternate choices would have brought any better results for them. But in any case, Trotsky tended to regard errors of judgment—if that is what they were—as “betrayal.”

This was particularly the case with regard to POUM, led during the early months of the Civil War by Andrés Nin. In retrospect, it may have been a mistake for POUM to enter the Catalan government in September 1936. But in utterly condemning that decision, Trotsky certainly gave no weight to the fact that to have stayed apart from the Catalan government would have been for POUM to isolate itself totally from the CNT-FAI under circumstances in which the CNT-FAI was the principal bulwark of the revolution in Catalonia. Trotsky seemed not at all to recognize the need for POUM to maintain a relationship with the CNT-FAI which might permit it to influence the thinking and actions of the anarchists, not only to defend the revolution, but to defend the very existence of POUM itself in the face of the onslaught of the Stalinists.

The POUM, led largely by Trotsky's ex-comrades, was not at all in the position of the Bolsheviks of 1917. Rather than being able to lead a crusade against an unpopular war and for yearned-for reforms, it had to find ways to defend a revolution which had already occurred—in the face of overwhelming pressures from other supposed “Marxist-Leninists” against it—and to do so without endangering the prosecution of a war the winning of which everyone (including Trotsky) agreed was the sine qua non for revolution of any kind. They may have made errors in judgment, but they were certainly not “betraying” the revolution.

Another alienating aspect of Trotsky's viewing Spain and the behavior of his Spanish followers in the light of the Bolshevik Revolution was his emphasis on “demo-

cratic centralism.” This was clear in at least two regards.

One issue which perturbed Trotsky's relations with his Spanish followers virtually from the beginning was their doubts about Trotsky's and the 15's treatment of other sections of the movement, particularly those of France and Germany. Related to this was the handling of the Spanish Trotskyist themselves by the International Secretariat and Trotsky.

It seems clear that in the Molinier-Rosmer dispute in the French movement Andrés Nin's sympathy was with the latter. He never became convinced, apparently, that that quarrel had any other cause than personal conflict between the two men, and he trusted Rosmer whom he had known for many years much more than Molinier, whom he did not know at all at the time the dispute developed. He clearly thought that Trotsky and the International Secretariat had mishandled the whole affair. He had the same suspicion about the treatment of Kurt Landau and his group in the German movement.

When Nin and the other Spanish Trotskyist leaders did have personal contact with Raymond Molinier their suspicions seemed to them to be confirmed. He came to Spain for the first time, made very considerable promises about financial aid to the struggling organization there, and then did not keep those promises. On his second visit he tried to get them to take positions to which they were almost all opposed.

This attitude of the Spaniards clearly nettled Trotsky. Years later he continued to chastise them for it. It seemed clear that he thought that once he and the International Secretariat had made their decisions on the matter, that should have been the end of all discussion about it.

Furthermore, Trotsky and the International Secretariat, suspicious of Nin, clearly sought to undermine him even when it was clear that he spoke for virtually the whole Spanish leadership. They insisted on regard-

Trotskyism in Spain After the Civil War

ing Henri Lacroix as representing a "faction" in his quarrels with the leadership when in fact he spoke only for himself and at most half a dozen others. The International Secretariat also sought to foster the Fersen group after he had entered the Socialist Party and broken with ICE, as well as to deal with people who had quit the movement, on a par with the elected leaders of ICE.

The same adherence to his view of democratic centralism provided the issue over which Trotsky's followers finally broke with him. When he decided on the "French Turn" he presumed that it was to be carried out by any group of his followers that he wanted to do so. In the Spanish case he not only completely swept aside the fact that the ICE leaders and members were almost unanimous in opposition to the tactic, but also the fact that the Spanish Socialist Party was very different from that of France. Whereas the French party allowed formal factional groupings within its ranks, that of Spain did not. The Trotskyists would not have been admitted to the PSOE if they had tried to go in, as the International Secretariat described it, "with their flags flying."

To greatly understate the case, Leon Trotsky did not show himself at his best in dealing with his Spanish followers. Certainly the totality of the blame for the ultimate break between them did not rest on his shoulders, but most of it did. His dogmatism, his lack of knowledge about the situation, his ultimate insistence on obedience on the part of his supporters all created a gulf which proved unbridgeable. But perhaps had Leon Trotsky acted differently in this case, he would not have been Leon Trotsky.

Spanish Trotskyism was all but completely destroyed as a result of the final victory of the Franco forces in the Civil War. A quarter of a century was to pass before a serious beginning would be made in rebuilding a movement within Spain. During that period the handful of Spanish Trotskyist exiles quarreled bitterly among themselves and split into several rival factions.

It was the 1960s before organizations began to develop in Spain and among the exiles out of which would be born a new Spanish Trotskyist movement. It came fully into existence in the 1970s, but in the form of several rival groups owing allegiance to different factions of the international movement.

Aftermath of the Franco Victory

Two prominent Spanish Trotskyists succeeded in escaping from Barcelona, where they had been held by the Stalinists in the Monjuic Prison for some months before the capture of the Catalan capital by Franco's forces. They passed through the lines of the Franco forces and evaded French border patrols to get into that country. These two men were Manuel Fernández Grandizo, better known as Grandizo Munis, and Jaime Fernández Rodríguez, subsequently known as J. Costa.

The first public notice of the escape of the Spanish Trotskyists appeared in an interview with Munis in the French Trotskyist paper, *La Lutte Ouvrière* in its issues of February 24 and March 3, 1939. Subsequently, in August, Munis sent a report on the situation of his Spanish followers to Trotsky.¹

In the spring of 1940 Munis, a Mexican by birth, left for America, and in his native land

had a meeting with Trotsky. He then went to New York, where he participated in the May 1940 Emergency Conference of the Fourth International.²

Munis presented a report to this conference. He told his comrades that "after the declaration of war, political work of the Spanish Bolsheviks has been almost totally suspended. All our comrades are incarcerated in concentration camps and labor brigades, and very few are in liberty. The possibilities of political contact among them are very rare. Each group must work independently and discuss the problems which are presented to them."³

Munis professed to be very optimistic about the future of the Trotskyist movement in Franco Spain: "In Spain itself contacts have begun to be established. We already have contacts in Madrid and Barcelona, for example, with comrades who have been imprisoned or detained in the concentration camps of Franco. In Madrid, all the comrades who have not been arrested have renewed their activity. . . ."⁴

Soon after his return to Mexico, Munis spoke at the funeral of Leon Trotsky in August 1940. Thereafter he sought to reestablish the Spanish Trotskyist movement among exiles in Mexico. In this effort, he was aided by Benjamin Peret, the French surrealist poet, who had also fled to Mexico. Together, they attempted to publish a periodical, *19 de Julio*, only two issues of which appeared.⁵

After the fall of France the Fourth International's headquarters in New York found it very difficult to maintain contact with Trotskyist groups in occupied Europe. Perhaps principally as a consequence of this, the Munis group in Mexico remained the only official Spanish affiliate of the Fourth International.⁶

When it became too expensive to maintain *19 de Julio*, the Spanish Trotskyists in Mexico began to publish a mimeographed organ, *Contra la Corriente*. Articles appearing in it during the next few years were

sometimes republished in the U.S. Trotskyist periodical *Fourth International*.⁷

The Munis Dissidence

Meanwhile, Munis and those associated with him began to have increasing differences with the Fourth International headquarters in New York, and with its principal backer, the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. These originated from Munis's criticisms of the behavior of the U.S. Trotskyist leaders during the so-called "Minneapolis Trials." Both Munis's criticism and the defense by James Cannon of the position of the SWP leaders in that trial were subsequently published by the SWP. Stephen Schwartz argues that Munis had the backing of Trotsky's widow, Natalia Sedova, in his criticisms of the SWP leaders.⁸

The Minneapolis Trial issue was only the beginning of the Munis-Peret group's dissidence from the Fourth International. More fundamentally, Munis had begun to have doubts about whether the USSR was any longer a "workers state." Discussion over this issue continued after the war, during 1946 and 1947, in the *International Information Bulletin* of the SWP and in other Trotskyist publications. Among these was *Revolución*, an organ published by Munis in Paris.

Stephen Schwartz has noted that "the formal break was announced by the editorial board of *Revolución*, the Munisite organ in France, in a declaration dated November 1948." In that statement Munis claimed: "Without a rapid and energetic reaction by the groups and sections the IV International will be converted into a miserable POUM or other."⁹

The conflict between the Munis group and the leadership of the Fourth International came clearly into the open at the Second Congress of the International early in 1948. The International Secretariat's report to the congress, delineated the basis of this conflict.

The International Secretariat reported that the Munis group

has revealed two sorts of divergence: on the political level these comrades proceed from a completely false analysis of the USSR and of state capitalism. But what is still worse is that their conclusions are completely sectarian. Thus, for example, they reject as inadmissible the tactic of united front with the Stalinist parties. They reject furthermore certain vital parts of our transition program [nationalization, government of the traditional workers parties]; starting from the same sectarian concept, Comrade Munis has launched an attack against the whole policy of the International during the war, and particularly against the British and American Trotskyists . . . "on the organization level, they have launched a violent attack against the administration of the International, its methods of functioning, and particularly against the procedure for preparation of the World Congress. . . ."¹⁰

Stephen Schwartz has noted that at this 1948 congress "the Munis forces blocked with Shachtman, whose Workers Party participated in the deliberations from an oppositional perspective." He has also noted that "the 1948 World Congress saw the consummation of the split" of the Munis group from the Fourth International.¹¹

By 1949 the Munis group was calling itself the Grupo Comunista Internacionalista de España. In that year, it published a proclamation signed by, among others, Esteban Bilbao, Peret, J. Costa, A. Rodríguez, R. Montero, and Munis, which accused the Fourth International of illegitimately discriminating against the Spanish (Mexican) group.¹²

After a tramway strike in Barcelona in 1951 Munis and Costa went back to Spain. They apparently had little success in organizing an underground movement, but they were arrested late in 1952 and were sentenced to ten years imprisonment. Released

in 1957, they returned to France. There Munis began publishing a new periodical, *Alarma*, and laid the foundations for a new organization called Fomento Obrero Revolucionario.¹³

With the gradual relaxation of the Franco dictatorship in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Munis was able to establish a small organization in Spain, although he continued to live in France. In 1983, according to Stephen Schwartz, who for several years was closely associated with Munis,

The Spanish group really has only a shadow existence today, limited to two or three members from around fifty in the mid-1970s, after Franco's death. The Spanish FOR group benefitted highly both from the prestige attached to Munis's book, which was republished in Paris in the 1960s, and from the personal prestige and activity of people on the scene in Barcelona. This was all wasted. The predictable differences that emerged between the old Munis cadre in Paris and the younger personnel in Barcelona were utilized to justify, in essence, nothing more or less than a series of purges. And ugly purges at that. . . .

The FOR does not claim to be Trotskyist, but it has not ever renounced its origins in the FI. It has basically left unexamined the contradiction between its 'ancestors,' Trotskyism and its general 'ultraleftism'—opposition to unions, to national liberation, and to nationalization.¹⁴

The FOR did become an international organization. We note this aspect of its history in another chapter.

Spanish Trotskyist Exile Groups in France

The Spanish Trotskyists who had remained in France in 1939 established two different groups. One of these was the Grupo Comunista Español de la Cuarta Internacional, which was associated with the French FOR,

the more or less "official" French Trotskyist faction. The other element established the Grupo Bolchevique-Leninista por la Reconstrucción de la Cuarta Internacional, which was associated with Molinier's dissident Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI).

Some ex-Trotskyist elements left the ranks of the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM) exiles soon after the end of the Civil War. In 1939 Sebastián García (better known at the time by his pseudonym Damien) organized a Committee for the Congress of the POUM, urging the summoning of a congress of the party to discuss the policies which it had followed during the Civil War. The exiled leadership of POUM refused to hold such a congress, however, and Damien and his associates were expelled from the party. Damien joined the French PCI and the Spanish Trotskyist group associated with it.

At the time of the unification of the two French Trotskyist groups in 1943 the two Spanish factions which had been aligned with the POI and PCI also joined forces under the name Grupo Trotskista Español (GRE). The GRE published in Bordeaux a newspaper, *Lucha de Clases*, and another periodical, *19 de Julio*, the latter being edited by Sebastián García.¹⁵

Sebastián García (Damien) was the Spanish representative at the International Conference of the Fourth International in Paris in March 1946. He was arrested along with other delegates to that meeting and was held by the police for two days. At a subsequent public meeting held to protest the French government's attack on the International Conference, García spoke on behalf of the Spanish section of the Fourth International.¹⁶

There was at least some opposition among the Spanish Trotskyists to the turn which Fourth International policy took under the direction of Michel Pablo in the early 1950s. Although there is no indication that any Spanish group associated with the dissident International Committee under the leader-

ship of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, Sebastián García and others did return to POUM at that point. García remained in POUM until the formation, in the later 1970s of the Spanish party associated with the Lambertist faction of International Trotskyism.¹⁷

"Pre-Trotskyist" Groups

By the early and middle 1960s important economic, social, and political changes were taking place in Franco Spain. The economic development and particularly industrialization of the country had made substantial progress, as a consequence of which the urban working class was much larger than it had been at the end of the Civil War, and was much more widely dispersed geographically. In addition, many hundreds of thousands of Spanish workers had gone to work in West European countries where they had contact with various left-wing political groups.

At the same time, a new generation had grown up which had not known the turbulence of the early 1930s or the bitterness of the Civil War. This younger generation was increasingly critical of the oppressiveness and conservatism of the Franco regime. Finally, there had commenced at least some degree of relaxation of the dictatorship, which intensified in the years just preceding the death of the dictator.

It was against this background that there came into existence both among the exiles and inside Spain certain new left-wing groups which José Gutiérrez Alvarez has called "pre-Trotskyist."¹⁸ These were Marxist or Marxist-Leninist groups but were not clearly aligned with any of the existing international currents of political opinion and action.

One of the most important of these groups was the Frente de Liberación Popular (FLP), which was organized in the early 1960s "in the wake of the Cuban and Algerian events." It had within its ranks both non-Stalinist

Marxists and extreme left-wing Christians. It saw itself as being to the left of the Communists, and looked with sympathy on such groups as the PSU of France and PSIUP of Italy, left-wing splinters of the Socialist parties of those countries. A number of people started their political activities and careers in the FLP who were later to be leaders of such diverse groups as the Socialists, official Communists, Catalan Nationalists, and even the centrist party of Prime Minister Suárez, organized after the death of General Franco.

The FLP splintered in 1968, giving rise to many different groups. One of these was the "Comunismo" Group, which was an immediate forebear of one of the principal Trotskyist organizations to appear in the 1970s. It published a periodical *Comunismo* and was said to have had about thirty members in Madrid, Barcelona, and the North.

José Gutiérrez Alvarez has said of the Comunismo Group that "its initial positions were considerably removed from habitual Trotskyism . . . were radically leftist. It believed in the possibility of an immediate revolution and saw the moderate policy of the PCE [Spanish Communist Party] as the principal obstacle to its development. It refused to work in the mass movement on the pretext that it was made up of reformists. . . it also saw the national question as 'bourgeois' and its actions in public meetings and demonstrations were quite violent."¹⁹

Another pre-Trotskyist group was Acción Comunista (AC), which was formed in 1964–65 by some of the Marxist elements in the FLP, "especially its exterior Federation, formed by people exiled to France, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland after the strikes of 1962." These included some members of the youth organization of the POUM and some people who had belonged to the Spanish Communist Party (PCE).²⁰

"Some of those who were to found AC published in 1963 two numbers of a periodical called *Revolución Socialista*, which ex-

pressed support for Ernest Mandel's ideas about the industrialized countries and those of the Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco on agrarian matters. The first issue of *Acción Comunista* developed a number of ideas very similar to resolutions of the USEC of some years previous." A group of AC members inside Spain published in 1967–68 a mimeographed periodical *Vanguardia Comunista*, which proclaimed loyalty to "the tradition of revolutionary Marxism, continued by Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Gramsci, and particularly by Trotsky in his struggle against Stalinism, and presently enriched by contributions of Ernest Mandel, Hugo Blanco, and others."²¹

In spite of these apparent links with Trotskyism, the leaders of AC "refused to enter the IV International" (that is, USEC) in 1971.²² Nevertheless, "at the beginning of the seventies, the USEC still hoped to win the AC for its future section. . . ."²³ Shortly before it disappeared, AC in early 1977 showed some continuing adherence to Trotskyist ideas. Thus, it proclaimed that "the construction of socialism in one country is today, more than ever, a reactionary utopia. For, the proletariat's vocation is international, its presence and action overflows national limits: the proletariat doesn't have a fatherland."²⁴

Finally, the remnants of POUM constituted, in a sense, a "pre-Trotskyist" organization in the 1970s, since some elements of the new Trotskyist movement were to come out of that group. The POUM was revived inside Spain in 1975 but by the early 1980s had all but disappeared, some of its remaining leaders and members returning to residence abroad, others dropping out of active politics.²⁵

The Posadista Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista)

The first avowedly Trotskyist group which was established in this period seems to have been one affiliated with the wing of the in-

ternational movement headed by J. Posadas. Soon after the organization of the Posadas version of the Fourth International the Bureau of its International Secretariat sent greetings to "the Spanish section." This document began, "We greet, with true emotion, your decision to begin the constitution of the Spanish Section of the Fourth International. . . ." Later on the greeting commented that "the Spanish section of the IV International that you are constituting and the immediate steps you will give with the appearance of the periodical, will reinforce the dynamics of the leap which the International has taken in Europe. . . ." ²⁶

Although this first document addressed to the Posadas party in Spain did not identify it by name, an issue of the Posadas version of *Cuarta Internacional* about a year later carried a proclamation by the Spanish group, identified as the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista), concerning a strike which had recently taken place in Asturias. The same issue noted that the Spanish party had an official organ, *Lucha Obrera*, which was being published in Brussels and edited by M. Fernández. ²⁷

In the following year, 1964, the Seventh World Congress of the Posadas version of the Fourth International adopted a resolution concerning the arrest of a number of members of its Spanish section by the Franco regime. It accused the Stalinist Communist Party of Spain of turning in both Trotskyist and Maoist trade unionists and activists to Franco authorities so as to remove their competition. ²⁸

The same issue of *Cuarta Internacional* which reported the details of the Seventh Congress carried an appeal by the POR(τ) on the occasion of another strike in the Asturias region. It called for workers to demand "workers control of production, nationalization of large industries and banks, workers and peasants alliance, occupation, distribution and collectivization of the land; democratic rights of unionization, of the press, of workers parties. . . ." ²⁹

In mid-1967 it was reported that in January of that year the European Bureau of the Posadas Fourth International had organized a cadres school "in a city of Spain with the participation of thirty comrades." The school was reported as lasting seven days, and to have included courses in Marxist philosophy and economics, history of the labor movement, the Fourth International and the Workers State, present state of the World Revolution, and Europe and Spain. ³⁰

Four years later, the POR(τ) was still in existence. It was reported that it was by then publishing its periodical, *Lucha Obrera*, clandestinely inside Spain. ³¹ At late as 1978 the Posadistas claimed that their periodical *Lucha Obrera* was still appearing. ³²

For practical purposes, the POR(τ) disappeared as a functioning organization during the 1970s. José Gutiérrez Alvarez, who has been aligned with the United Secretariat, has noted that "its history, although a bit ridiculous, does not remove the fact that it had a certain importance in its early years. There participated in it some important leaders—four at least—of the present LCR. . . ." Gutiérrez Alvarez added: "This group disappeared or was almost extinguished in the seventies, although even today, very sporadically, its propaganda is seen, even without its maintaining any known degree of militancy." ³³

The United Secretariat in Spain

The second avowedly Trotskyist group to be organized was the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR), which was established in 1971 as the Spanish section of the United Secretariat. It was set up by members of the Comunismo Group, which had split from the FLP in 1968. ³⁴

Some of the Comunismo Group people had gone to France, where they had made contact with the exiled leaders of P.O.U.M. They tended to be alienated by what they deemed a patronizing attitude on the part of the P.O.U.M.ists. Some of them then made

contact with the Ligue Communiste in Paris and were converted to Trotskyism. Upon their return to Spain in 1970 they took the first steps towards establishing the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria.³⁵

The early LCR, which consisted of "a few dozen militants" apparently bore the stamp of its origin. A more or less authorized statement by the party commented half a dozen years later that "with many features in common with ultraleftism, the LCR had some characteristics of its own, especially a systematic defence of the class independence of the proletariat and of the self-organization of the movement of the masses, for the first time in the thirty-five years of dictatorship an organization in the Spanish state assumed the revolutionary Marxist program, Trotskyist, of the IV International."

This same source noted that "the first LCR was an immature organization, with very precarious relations with the working class, which had barely begun to understand a series of problems of the revolution in the Spanish state. Practically everything remained to be done."³⁶

The Liga Comunista Revolucionaria was scarcely a year old when it suffered a major split. Almost half of its members broke away to form the Liga Comunista (LC). The issues involved were those of the controversy then raging within USEC over guerrilla warfare and related questions. The LCR continued to be aligned with the "Europeans" who constituted the majority in USEC, the LC joined the faction headed by the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.³⁷

This split continued for about six years. Both the Liga Comunista and the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria were officially "sympathizing organizations" of the United Secretariat. During this period the two organizations followed somewhat different tactics on several issues. This was particularly the case with regard to trade union activity and electoral participation.

Both the LC and LCR expressed total opposition to the "trade union" organization of

the Franco regime—the Central Nacional Sindicalista (CNS)—which persisted as the only legal workers organization for several years after the dictator's death. In July 1975 they both called upon the workers to boycott CNS elections, although in fact about 85 percent of the workers participated in those elections.

The LC and LCR seem to have had somewhat different orientations with regard to what should take the place of the CNS. Early in 1977 an unidentified leader of the LC noted that "independent trade union organization must develop, so we call on the workers to join the UGT and CNT. Right now we work in the UGT, which is the biggest union with the best possibilities for growth . . . We also propose a UGT-CNT alliance as a step toward a congress that would unify the two federations."³⁸

The UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores), the traditional Socialist Party dominated union group, was reviving rapidly in the late 1970s. The CNT, the traditional anarchosindicalist union group, with its principal strength in Catalonia and Aragón, in fact did not once again become a major trade union federation after the end of the Franco regime.

The other principal illegal trade union group in the late 1970s was the Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), which was largely dominated by the Communist Party. The LCR appears to have been more oriented toward the CCOO than toward either the UGT or CNT.

The official statement of the position of the LCR early in 1977, previously cited, noted the organization's position on the trade union question. It observed "the present struggle of the LCR for reinforcing the Comisiones Obreras and for the construction of the Single Workers Union. The capacity of the CCOO to organize a wide labor vanguard during the last fifteen years of struggle against the dictator has converted it into the organic protagonist of the rebirth of the labor movement . . ."³⁹

The two Trotskyist groups also took dif-

ferent attitudes toward the first elections called by the post-Franco regime in 1977. The Liga Comunista favored abstention from the elections; the LCR participated in them in alliance with several other far left organizations.

The position of the LC was stated by the unidentified leader of the group interviewed early in 1977: "In the present circumstances the mass movement is systematically going beyond each one of the frauds of the reform. Given the current relationship of class forces, we believe revolutionists should take a position in favor of boycotting the elections to the Francoist Cortes, Suárez's fictitious parliament. This should be an active boycott calling for a freely elected Constituent Cortes. . . ."⁴⁰

An article by Gerry Foley in *Intercontinental Press* on June 20, 1977, explained the LCR's position on that year's elections: "The Trotskyists of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria . . . have tried to use the elections to offer a revolutionary alternative to the SP and CP campaigns. . . . The LCR is running candidates on the ticket of the Frente por la Unidad de los Trabajadores. . . . This coalition also includes the Organización de Izquierda Comunista . . . as well as Acción Comunista. In Catalonia, it includes the POUM . . . and members of the Movimiento Comunista. The LCR is by far the largest group."⁴¹

A statement by the Political Bureau of the LCR after the election analyzed the results, including those of its own revolutionary coalition: "All in all, we think that the 40,000 votes obtained—an average of 0.5 percent in the provinces where we ran candidates—clearly show the usefulness of entering the electoral arena. . . . The gains constitute a strong basis of support for the struggles of the coming months and for advancing an alternative line to the policy of social and constitutional pacts, the policy the reformist workers leadership are going to push."⁴²

Although the LCR had been unable to

achieve legal recognition as a political party before the 1977 election, it subsequently continued efforts to achieve that recognition. Finally, after intervention with the electoral authorities on behalf of the LCR by leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties, the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria was officially recognized.⁴³

In March 1977 a youth organization of the LCR, the Federación de Juventudes Comunistas Revolucionarias (FJCR), was established at a congress in Madrid. It was reported as having 2,000 members, of whom 40 percent were in the Basque provinces.⁴⁴ By 1984 the FJCR was reported to have local groups in thirteen different cities. It was publishing a magazine, *Barricada*, which published articles in Catalan and Basque as well as in Spanish.⁴⁵

Although at the time of the 1972 split the two factions of the USEC in Spain were roughly equal in size, there seems little doubt that during the six years that the split lasted, the LCR became substantially larger than its rival. A few months before reunification, the supporters of the LC credited the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria with about 3,500 members "in all the Spanish state," of whom 60 percent were wage earners and 32 percent were women.⁴⁶

One major gain in membership for the LCR came in its merger with a faction of the Basque nationalist movement, the so-called ETA(VI). The ETA had been the guerrilla or terrorist wing of Basque nationalism. At its fifth congress in 1967 "there were presented a series of positions of a Marxist-Leninist type, some positions of an internationalist character, and a willingness to place the working class in the center of its strategy was expressed."⁴⁷

At that time the leadership of the movement continued to be ideologically quite heterogeneous. It was not until the arrest of most of the top leadership of the ETA in the spring of 1969 that a provisional leadership assumed control which stressed the need for mass mobilization rather than "military"

action. As a consequence when the Sixth Congress of the organization met in September 1970, the military wing refused to participate, and the ETA split into two factions, labelled ETA(v), made up of the military faction and ETA(vi), consisting of Trotskyist-leaning Marxist-Leninists.⁴⁸

The pro-Trotskyist element of ETA defined the nationalist struggle of the Basque provinces as being part of the working-class conflict with capitalism. It continued to support the idea of a Basque constituent assembly which would proclaim the sovereignty of Euzkadi, but then would join in an Iberian federation in a "free union."

José Iriarte of ETA(vi) defended this position, arguing that "in equal circumstances, in principle, large states resulting from free and voluntary union are more favorable than small separated states, with greater dangers of economic strangulation, bureaucratic deformation because of defense problems, internal weakness, etc." He added that "we are in any case for those solutions which permit and favor stable and specific coexistence among the peoples, on the basis of absolute equality in national rights."⁴⁹

Finally, the ETA(vi) people accused their former colleagues of weakening not only the struggle for a sovereign Euzkadi, but that against a return to a Franco-type dictatorship throughout Spain, by their continued use of terrorism. The military ETA not only alienated large parts of the Basque working class, but strengthened those people in the Spanish Army and elsewhere who were for a return to a regime such as that of Franco.⁵⁰

About three years after the split in the ETA, the ETA(vi) faction held its seventh Congress, late in 1973. At the same time, the LCR held its Third Congress. The meetings decided to merge the two organizations, forming the LCR-ETA(vi). In the following year the LCR-ETA(vi) absorbed another group, the Fracción Bolchevique-Leninista, a small Barcelona-based organization with mainly a working-class membership.⁵¹

At the end of 1977 and beginning of 1978 the split in USEC ranks in Spain was finally

healed. The impetus for reunification seems to have come particularly from the LCR. Late in 1976 an LC source noted that the LCR was urging unity because both groups belonged to USEC, but added that "LC, however, does not see this operation as immediate, only as necessary in the abstract."⁵²

However, the Liga Comunista at its Fourth Congress, October 29-November 1, 1977, agreed to seek immediate reunification with the LCR. Its resolution said that "the congress analyzed the history of our party's relations with the LCR. The clear conclusion drawn was to recognize that *no political or organizational justification had ever existed for maintaining such a division. . .*"⁵³

On December 17-18, 1977, there was a joint meeting of the central committees of the LC and LCR, which agreed to seek reunification. The meeting planned a unity congress in March 1978.⁵⁴

A few elements of the LCR and LC did not join in the reunified LCR. José Gutiérrez Alvarez has noted that those who stayed outside of it were "a very small fraction which evolved toward Lambertism and another still smaller one which under the leadership of 'Selva,' former leader of the LC, created a diffuse ultraleftist group which tried to construct something like the Vth International, but which survived only as a small group of friends."⁵⁵

In the new dispute within the United Secretariat in the early 1980s, which originated with the turn of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States away from Trotskyism, the LCR was strongly in favor of the USEC majority. They expressed skepticism about the kind of "new international" which the SWP professed to be seeking to form.⁵⁶

The reunited LCR carried out its trade union activity principally in the Comisiones Obreras. According to Gutiérrez Alvarez, the LCR

animates together with left tendencies of the CP, with the MCE [Movimiento Comunista de España, ex-Maoist], and other

smaller groups, an important Left Current which is the majority in some parts of Asturias and Euzkadi, and in Catalonia, where the PCC [Partido Comunista de Cataluna, formed by a leftist split in the PSC] is the majority force in the unions. The LCR has representation in the highest trade union levels; in general, the Regional Federation is rare in which, among twenty to thirty members of Executives there is no representation of the LCR, which, to be sure, rarely surpasses half a dozen people.⁵⁷

Of the Comisiones Obreras, Gutiérrez Alvarez has said that they "can in no way be considered as nothing more than a 'transmission belt' for the CP—the UGT is that for the PSOE—but is a much broader movement, with profound traditions of internal democracy. . . . Only in very isolated cases—in Asturias, Euzkadi, and Navarre—have there been cases of expulsion—of majorities. That is to say that the 'Eurocommunists,' when they see themselves overrun by a leftist majority have reacted by expelling not only the Trotskyists. . . ."⁵⁸

At the Third Congress of the Comisiones Obreras in June 1984, the LCR, with the support of representatives of the Movimiento Comunista, was able for the first time to elect a member of the Executive Commission of the organization, Joaquín Nieto. Rival lists of candidates from the ranks of the Communist Party received twenty-six and fourteen positions respectively, another list of delegates to the left of the Communists received eight posts. According to *Combate*, organ of the LCR, the vote of one more delegate would have given the LCR two seats in the Executive.⁵⁹

For some time the LCR also worked inside the unions of the UGT, where they "acquired certain importance between 1977 and 1980, being almost the majority in Alavá, Pamplona, and Vendrell (Tarragona). However, continuous expulsions have modified this influence which at present is quite reduced."⁶⁰

The LCR after its reunification in 1978 also participated in general elections, on a Spain-wide, regional, and municipal level, being the only Trotskyist group to do so consistently. Elections for the national Cortes were held in 1979 and 1983; regional elections were held in Euzkadi and Catalonia in 1979 and 1980, and in Andalusia and Galicia in 1981; municipal polls took place in 1979 and 1981.

In the 1979 parliamentary elections the LCR received less than half the 100,000 votes it had received two years earlier.⁶¹ However, a few weeks later the party did quite well in municipal elections. They elected twenty-six municipal counselors and one local mayor, most of their victories coming in the Basque provinces.⁶² However, in 1982 the LCR received only about 30,000 votes in the elections for the Cortes.⁶³

In 1984 the LCR ran candidates in the regional elections of Catalonia. They did not invest very much effort in the campaign, sensing that there was a disenchantment among the workers in the electoral process.⁶⁴

As their experience within the Communist-dominated trade union group, the CCOO indicates, the contacts of the LCR with the official Spanish Communists were not in the traditional mold of Trotskyist-Stalinist relations. This fact was highlighted when the LCR was invited to send a delegate to deliver a greeting to the Ninth Congress of the Spanish Communist Party in April 1978. The LCR representative advocated joint action of the workers parties against the regime of Prime Minister Suárez and suggested that the Spanish Communists urge their Soviet comrades to rehabilitate Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, and other victims of the Moscow Trials, and themselves take the lead in rehabilitating the reputation of Andrés Nin.⁶⁵

Five years later José Gutiérrez Alvarez commented on this new relationship between Spanish Trotskyists and (ex?) Stalinists. He noted that "in the presentation of my biography of Trotsky at which there

were old Stalinist leaders . . . all entoned their 'mea culpa' although, obviously, they tried to justify themselves with various explanations."⁶⁶

Gutiérrez Alvarez has noted that "since the IV Congress in 1980, the LCR has carried out an important political rectification which other Trotskyist groups consider as 'revisionism.' This is abandonment of the conception of a revolutionary labor party based on its own growth. Now it supports: a) favoring the largest leftist groups—on a class basis—to prepare the ground for b) a party of all revolutionaries. This has been made concrete in the electoral field by the disappearance of the initials in a good number of coalitions with independents and people of other parties. Thus, for example, the CUT (Unitary Candidate of the Workers) has won more than fifty municipal counselors in Andalucía, with two mayors . . . whose activities have continually gotten headlines in the daily press."⁶⁷

Soon after its establishment the LCR began to publish a periodical, *Combate*. During the period of the LCR-LC split, both groups put out papers with that name.⁶⁸ In the early 1980s the LCR also undertook publication of a Spanish-language version of the United Secretariat's magazine, *Inprecor*. It carried articles which also appeared in the "international" edition of *Inprecor*, published in Paris, and articles originating in Spain.⁶⁹

Other Trotskyist Groups

The Lambertists

The faction of international Trotskyism headed by the French leader Pierre Lambert has had representation in Spain virtually since the beginning of the revival of the movement in that country. Like the USEC element, its origins were to be found in the Comunismo Group of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The first Lambertist group in Spain originated in the Fracción Trotskista of the

Comunismo Group, as did the LCR. Soon after the formation of the LCR, an element broke away under the leadership of one of the principal figures of the Comunismo Group to establish the Organización Trotskista Española (OTE). It reportedly gained some recruits from both the LCR and LC, and even from the Communist Party, before the OTE itself split in 1974.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, a group of Spanish Trotskyists aligned with Lambert had been working within POUm since its reestablishment inside Spain in 1975. They broke with POUm over the 1977 parliamentary elections, opposing the party's participation in a coalition which included the LCR.⁷¹ They apparently joined with the remnants of the OTE to establish in 1979 the Partido Obrero Socialista Internacionalista (POSI).

On October 31–November 2, 1980, a "unification congress" was held involving the POSI and dissidents from the USEC affiliates. At the founding congress of the POSI, the "Fourth Congress of the LC" and the "State Conference of the Public Fraction of the LCR," had previously agreed to unification with the POSI. Some forty-three delegates attended the 1980 congress; the new group kept the name POSI and decided to issue a party newspaper, *Combate Socialista*.⁷²

The POSI held its third Congress between April 30 and May 2, 1982. Among those addressing the meeting were Pierre Lambert, who brought greetings from the Provisional International Secretariat and the French PCI, and fraternal delegates from five other Lambertist parties. The meeting called for a united struggle against the Suárez government then in power, and for establishment of a Socialist-Communist administration. It also adopted resolutions supporting the work of the International Reconstruction Center of the Fourth International, and supporting the struggle of Solidarity in Poland.⁷³

The POSI did not win legal recognition for electoral purposes at that time. It did have candidates in some districts in the October

1982 election, which brought to power the Socialist Party government of Prime Minister Felipe González. They ran under the label Liga Comunista.

An article in *Combate Socialista* about those elections noted a number of the party's principal leaders at that time. Among these were Sebastián García, president of the party and former POUmist; José Sargas, one-time honorary president of the Socialist Party of Catalonia; Joaquín Villanueva, veteran of the guerrilla struggle against the Franco regime; Manuel Gross-Mier, a leader in the October 1934 revolution and a leading POUmist military commander during the Civil War; Ildefonso Gómez, secretary of the POSI and former secretary general of the Young Socialists; Felipe Alegría, former secretary general of the Liga Comunista; and Angel Tubau, a founding member of the LCR and the LC.⁷⁴

With the victory of the Socialists in the 1982 elections the POSI became increasingly strong in its condemnation of the policies followed by the González government. The Political Resolution of the Fourth Congress of the organization in April 1983 synthesized this campaign against the Socialist Party administration:

Felipe González forms a government of the Popular Front type against the advance towards the revolutionary crisis to defend the Franquista monarchy and all of its institutions, that is to say, the bourgeois State as it is, trying to contain and detain the movement of the masses. . . . Submitting itself to the Crown and financial capital, the political plan of the government seeks to repress the most elemental rights and democratic liberties, maintaining and reinforcing the dispositions of national oppression, of exploitation of the masses.

The POSI affirms its willingness to raise the banner of democracy against all imposition, against submission of the leaders of the PSOE and of the PCE to the Monar-

chy. For democracy and respect for the popular will, the POSI will concentrate its efforts to achieve that all executive and legislative powers pass into the hands of the representatives of the people, which supposes the proclamation of the Sovereign Cortes and of the Republic. The Sovereign Cortes must thus proclaim the self-determination of the nationalities, the right of independence of Euzkadi.⁷⁵

The POSI worked both within the UGT and the CCOO. Right after the end of the Franco regime, it also worked within the CNT, but came to the conclusion that the CNT was too small and weak to be worth much trouble.

The POSI had its principal centers of strength in Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, and Valencia. However, by 1982, it also had at least small groups in most of the other important cities.⁷⁶ It finally gained legal recognition as a political party early in 1984.⁷⁷

The "Vargaites"

Not only was the Lambertist faction of international Trotskyism represented in Spain in the 1970s and 1980s; so was its offshoot the Varga faction. The principal figure in founding the Organización Trotskyista Española, known as "Alfonso," broke with Lambert in 1974 at the time of the international split in the ranks of the Lambertist faction. He established the Partido Obrero Revolucionario de España (PORE).⁷⁸

Early in 1977 a more or less official statement of PORE said that the party "sums up and concentrates its principal tasks, postulating that to take over direction of the proletariat and to bring it to power, it is necessary to convert the fall of the fascist dictatorship into the beginning of the Spanish proletarian revolution, and to then extend it to all of Europe. This revolutionary process is prepared by a frontal combat to take from the CP the direction of the labor movement, thus provoking its beginning."⁷⁹

Gutiérrez Alvarez reported in 1983 that

the Varga group had always been confined largely to the Tarrasa area in Catalonia. He also claimed that it was "surviving but increasingly weak."⁸⁰ The *PORE* published a newspaper, *La Aurora*.⁸¹

The *PORE* evinced strong opposition to the Socialist Party government of Felipe González, which came to power late in 1982. It proposed the formation of a leftist united front under the old name *Alianza Obrera* to combat the González regime and get the workers to break with it. The party newspaper *La Aurora* explained in July 1984 that "in the first place, we propose to the organizations which, although oscillating, show certain opposition to the Government. These are the PST, the LCR, the MC, the POSI which, although minority organizations, might represent through the formation of an *ALIANZA OBRERA*, the means through which the mobilization of the workers might advance and enormously increase their political weight. If in the beginning we do not extend this proposal to the PCE it is because we see how far we are from an agreement of this type although that should not bar a common struggle."⁸² There is no indication that any of the other parties paid any attention to the overtures of *PORE*.

Shortly afterward, *PORE* called for the preparation of the general strike against the González regime.⁸³

The Healyites

The International Committee of the Fourth International, headed by Gerry Healy, also has had its supporters in Spain. They first appeared within the Organización Trotskista Española.⁸⁴ Elements of that group founded the Liga Obrera Comunista (LOC) on December 23, 1973, and in May 1974, during the International Conference of Healy's International Committee, the LOC was accepted as its Spanish section.

A more or less official statement early in 1977 of the LOC's position argued that it "defended the thesis of Lenin according to

which 'without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.' " It added that "the struggle against revisionism within the Marxist movement is the essence of the development of the theory of Marxism while capitalism still exists. . . . The highest point achieved in this struggle is the investigation and publication by the International Committee of the Fourth International, of the complicity of the leaders of the American SWP—Hansen and Novack—with the Stalinist GPU which in 1940 and in Coyoacán assassinated Trotsky. . . ."⁸⁵

This same statement claimed that "the program of the LOC is based on the theory of permanent revolution, as developed by Trotsky and proved in the policy of Lenin and the Bolshevik party in the Russian Revolution of October, beginning of the world revolution." It added that "in the center of the political activity of the LOC is the campaign to demonstrate before the masses and the members of the Stalinist party that the independent mobilization of the masses can do away with the regime and that, in consequence, it is necessary to demand of the leaderships of the CCOO, the UGT and the CNT that they call the General Strike and abolish the regime. . . ."⁸⁶

Gutiérrez Alvarez has noted that the Healyite group "never surpassed one hundred or its Catalan concentration."⁸⁷ The newspaper of the LOC was *Prensa Obrera*. It also published the theoretical journal *Marxismo* and its youth group, Juventud Revolucionaria Socialista, put out *Joven Revolucionario*.⁸⁸ There is no indication of how long or how regularly these periodicals appeared.

The Spartacists

Even a Spartacist faction appeared in Spain. There clearly was no such group in 1977, when a U.S. Spartacist periodical proclaimed: "The prerevolutionary crisis in Spain cries out for the intervention of an authentic Trotskyist party. . . ."⁸⁹ However, by the early 1980s it was reported (by an

unfriendly source) that "the 'Spartacists' have made their appearance—two or three North Americans who speak Spanish—with an organ which is printed in the U.S.A. for the Spaniards. It attempts to differentiate itself from the other Trotskyist groups by ferociously criticizing Solidarity."⁹⁰

The Morenoists

Concerning the origins of the Spanish group aligned with the Nahuel Moreno-led faction of International Trotskyism, Gutiérrez Alvarez has noted that they "arose about 1975 in a group in Madrid which split from the LCR. Together with exiled Morenistas they carried out entrism in the PSOE until 1978, when they entered the LCR to do the same there. They left there—together with a dozen Lambertists—a year later at the time of the debate over the Nicaraguan revolution."⁹¹

The Moreno group established the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST). That party took a particularly active part in the general election of 1982: "During its campaign the PST demanded a reduction of the work week to thirty-five hours without a reduction in pay. . . . It called for the expropriation of all banks, lands, and industries threatening to lay off workers without any indemnization, and placing them under workers' control. The PST pressed for the passage of a law to set the minimum monthly wage at 45,000 pesetas [\$352] and explained the necessity of forming a *government of workers without capitalists or generals*."⁹²

It seems clear that the PST did better in those elections than any of the other Trotskyist groups in Spain. It claimed to have received 300,490 votes for its candidates for senator, and 104,605 for its nominees for deputies, although it did not elect anyone to the Cortes. It ran some 470 candidates in all, of whom 178 were women. In some areas it received more votes than the right-wing Fuerza Nueva party, and in others, including

seventy-five villages in La Coruña province in Galicia, it surpassed the vote received by the Communist Party. Virtually everywhere that there was competition between PST and LCR candidates, the PST reported that it had done considerably better than its fellow Trotskyist rival.⁹³

It should be noted that the LCR opponents of the PST claimed that the Moreno group only received 60,000 votes.⁹⁴

Swedish Trotskyism

Trotskyism first appeared in Sweden soon after the Second World War. Anton Schou Madsen has noted its early history: "An International Bulletin of the Fourth International refers to 'Swedish comrades' as far back as 1946. The *Bulletin Interieur du Secretariat Internationale de la IVe Internationale*, Mai 1949 speaks of a Swedish group. In 1950 a Trotskyist paper was published in Sweden, called *Internationalen*, Organ for Revolutionara Socialister (Marxistisk Tidskrift) (Fjarde Internationalen), or *The International*, Organ of Revolutionary Socialists (Marxist Periodical) [Fourth International]. The name of the editor was Bertil Safstrom."

Madsen added that "this group for a period until probably 1949 worked inside another left-wing organization, called the Left Socialists. The Danish Trotskyist paper, *Det Ny Arbejderblad*, No. 3, May 1951 brings a short article on 'The Trotskyists and the Dockers Strike in Sweden.' The article talks about the Revolutionare Socialistiska Partiet with branches in Stockholm, Göteborg, and other cities."

According to Madsen the Trotskyist party ran a mass meeting in October 1951 attended by 1,000 people. At that point, the Social Democratic newspaper *Morgentidningen* was calling for a ban on the RSP.¹

Trotskyism revived in Sweden with the Revolutionara Marxister (Revolutionary Marxists—RM), associated with the United Secretariat, which was established in the process of the campaign against the Vietnam War. However, that anti-U.S. intervention movement was to a large extent dominated by pro-Maoist elements, particularly the Kommunistiska Forbundet Marxist-Lenisterna (KFML). As the Swedish Trotskyists themselves subsequently admitted, the KFML "acquired a stability and weight that

were used to instill a vulgar anti-Trotskyism in most of those who became involved in anti-imperialist activities. The first small Trotskyist group . . . was treated as an 'old fossil swimming against the current.'"²

The Trotskyists drew their original recruits from the Social Democrats, Communists, and Maoists as well as from people active in the anti-Vietnam campaign. At its inception, the group had about sixty members.³

Trotskyism began to be seen in a different light by some of the far left in Sweden as a result of the participation of the French Trotskyists in the May 1968 insurrection. As reported later in *Intercontinental Press*, "Trotskyism was no longer to be found simply in history books but out fighting in the front lines on the barricades in Paris!"

In the latter part of 1970 the Revolutionara Marxister merged with a dissident group from the KFML in the city of Lund to form the Revolutionara Marxisters Forbund (League of Revolutionary Marxists—RMF). However, this precipitated a split in the Trotskyists ranks and the formation of the rival Kommunistiska Arbetargrupper (Communist Labor Groups—KAS), which apparently was quite short-lived, many of the members of the KAS ultimately returning to the RMF.⁴

The Trotskyists continued for several years to have sharp polemics with groups growing out of the Stalinist tradition, particularly the KFML. This apparently consumed much of the time and energies of the group. It was not until 1972 that the RMF began what they called a "new course," which was ratified at the organization's Third Congress in January 1973.

On this new direction of the group's activities the RMF's periodical *Mullvaden* reported that:

The point of departure for the 'new course' was a report to the convention on the economic and political situation today. The thesis presented in this report

was that we are facing a period of economic and social struggles. Naturally, this period will not be a smooth one. . . . Out of the contradiction between what the working masses demand and what cannot be granted by this society, the stability of the Social Democracy will find itself challenged. . . . Thus the 'new course' grew out of reports and contributions to the convention that involve an initial reacquisition of the strategic concepts that were used in, for instance, the first four congresses of the Third International or that are part of the 'Transitional Program' of the Fourth International.

The major political resolution of the Third Congress was said by *Mullvaden* to be "a contribution to the process of working out a communist program, that is, a single program that takes up various phases of politics and organizational activity and their forms, as well as possible demands and slogans that can be actively raised by the masses in their independent organs of dual power and that, during the revolutionary situation, can be transformed into the expropriation of the bourgeoisie by the working class!"

It was reported that of the delegates to the RMF's Third Congress, 37 percent were workers, 50 percent were students, and that 75 percent were males. "The overwhelming majority were very young—fifteen to thirty years old. No less than 63 percent had been recruited from the ranks of other left-wing organizations. . . ."⁵

The RMF subsequently changed its name to *Kommunistiska Arbetarforbundet* (Communist Workers League—KAF), and adopted *Internationalen* (*The International*) for the name of its journal. The League carried on a number of different propaganda and organizational campaigns. So long as the Vietnam conflict went on, it continued to devote a good deal of its energy to that issue.⁶ Later, in 1979, at the time of the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, the main headline in *Internatio-*

nalen was "Chinese Troops Out of Vietnam," and the Political Bureau of the League strongly attacked the Chinese incursion.⁷

The Swedish Trotskyists also carried on campaigns in defense of Soviet dissidents. Thus, in December 1976 *Internationalen* carried an interview with the exiled Leonid Plyushch, who was touring Sweden as a guest of the local affiliate of Amnesty International.⁸ In February of the following year, it helped organize a demonstration in Lund "calling for democratic rights in East Europe and the USSR."⁹

The KAF also devoted considerable attention to domestic issues. Early in 1977 *Internationalen* launched a suggestion for a nationwide general strike in protest against "the offensive against the living standards of the workers in which the Swedish employers were said to be engaged."¹⁰

The Trotskyists were particularly active in the campaign against nuclear power, and in the nationwide referendum on the issue in March 1980. They supported Proposition Three in that referendum, which called "for the six reactors now under construction being dismantled in a maximum of ten years. It also says that no more reactors should be fueled and bars uranium mining in Sweden."¹¹

In 1981 the USEC affiliate in Sweden changed its name to Socialist Party. By the early 1980s they had established at least a modest base in the trade union movement. In the major Volvo automobile plant union, they had succeeded in getting 40 percent of the vote for a list of candidates which they supported. They claimed about 700 members and had begun to participate in elections.¹²

At the time of the Argentine invasion of the Malvinas (Falkland Islands) and the resulting war with Great Britain, the Swedish Socialist Party adopted a position rather different from that of most Trotskyist groups which generally aligned themselves with Argentina in the conflict. *Internationalen*, the party's paper, editorialized: "This is a

barbaric farce involving two rotten regimes trying to save their own skins by stirring up nationalist sentiment. The only standpoint the British and Argentine workers can take is that their own regime's defeat is the lesser evil. . . . The British war preparations must be stopped immediately! The Argentine troops must be withdrawn from the islands right now! The question of the status of the islands can only be solved through negotiations."¹³

The Swedish Trotskyists took an active part in the United Secretariat. It was reported that "a clear majority sided with the international majority at the 1974 congress. The same is true over disputed questions at the 1979 world congress."

It was reported in 1984 that "the section's main areas of activity are trade union work, international solidarity activities, antiracist work and women's solidarity."¹⁴ One of the important national leaders of the Socialist Party was Gote Kilden, head of the Union Opposition, organized to challenge the leadership of the union of workers in the Volvo auto factory in Göteborg, the country's largest industrial enterprise.¹⁵

By the early 1980's several factions of International Trotskyism in addition to USEC also had groups in Sweden. One of these was the Socialistiska Forbundet, which was affiliated with the Morenoist International Workers League (Fourth International) and consisted mainly of former members of the Socialist Party.¹⁶ The Posadas version of the Fourth International also claimed an affiliate in Sweden, at least in the 1970s, which published a periodical, *Kommunistik Kamp*.¹⁷ The Lambertist CORQI also had a small group, the Internationela Socialister.¹⁸ Very little information is available on these groups.

Trotskyism in Switzerland

Swiss Trotskyism has gone through two, or perhaps three definite periods in its history. It has never been a major element either in general national politics, the politics of the Left, or the trade union movement. However, like the movement in many other countries Trotskyism in Switzerland has been a persistent political tendency, unlike the Right Opposition of the 1930s, or the Maoists and other protoanarchist groups of the 1960s and thereafter. Thus, the history of Swiss Trotskyism extends over more than half a century.

The Early Swiss Trotskyist Movement

The origins of the Trotskyist movement in Switzerland are to be found in the spring of 1931, when a Left Opposition developed within the Communist element in the Marxist Students Group in Zürich.¹ One of the two principal figures in this very first phase of Swiss Trotskyism was the Polish student Solomon Ehrlich, a one-time member of the Communist Party of Palestine who was studying in Zürich and had been won over to Trotsky's ideas by reading some of his publications. He won to Trotsky's theories a young Swiss student, Walter Nelz, who for most of the 1930s remained the principal Trotskyist leader in the country.²

It was not until September 1933 that a formal Trotskyist organization, Marxistische Aktion der Schweiz (MAS), was established. It brought together a number of people who since 1931 had broken away from the Swiss Communist Party or had been expelled from it. Its members were principally in Zürich, Basel, and Schaffhausen.³

Although their national organization was

only established in the latter part of 1933, the Swiss Trotskyites were in touch with Trotsky and the International Secretariat considerably before then. Thus, Trotsky took particular note of the fact that circumstances had made it impossible for his Swiss followers to be represented at the "consultation" which took place on the occasion of his visit to Copenhagen in November 1932.⁴

When Trotsky adopted the tactic of entryism in the Second International Socialist parties, his Swiss followers followed his lead. Jan Frankel and the International Secretariat apparently convinced them to follow that line. It has been said that Swiss police reports indicated that the Trotskyists developed extensive influence within the Socialist Youth in this period. These reports also noted that a German Trotskyist exile, Hans Freund (known also as Moulin), a student in Genève, was one of the most important figures in the Swiss movement in this period.⁵ With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Freund went to Barcelona in August 1936, and after the "May Days" there in May 1937, was assassinated by the GPU.⁶

Trotsky himself wrote on July 28, 1935 about the Swiss Trotskyists that "in Switzerland our group publishes an independent sheet *Trotz Alledem* (*In Spite of Everything*). Yet, at the same time, the majority of the group is inside the SP, gathers the left opposition there, and tries successfully to take over the leadership . . . internal faction work plus an independent paper outside the party."⁷

Jean-François Marquis has noted that the Trotskyists worked within the Socialist Party in two cantons, Zürich "where they were rapidly excluded," and Basel. He has also reported that their periodical *Trotz Alledem* appeared for four years, between 1935 and 1939.⁸

With the onset of the Moscow Trials and of Trotsky's wish to mount a "countertrial" to prove the inaccuracy and perversity of the charges made against him during those Stalinist purges, he thought of the pos-

sibility of holding such a session in Switzerland. He wrote his attorney, Gerald Rosenthal, that "all the conditions indicate Switzerland as a country where it would be possible to have a trial without hindrance."⁹ The "trial" was ultimately held in Mexico.

Walter Nelz was consulted on this question, and was also Trotsky's confidant and attorney in libel suits which Trotsky brought in Switzerland against a number of Stalinist dignitaries, including Georgi Dimitrov, head of the Comintern; Jules Humbert-Droz, then head of the Swiss Communist Party; the editors of the organ of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI), *Communist International*, and of various other Comintern publications. The Swiss courts ultimately found in favor of Trotsky and awarded him damages of 10,000 Swiss francs.¹⁰

Although they had their own publication, the Swiss Trotskyists, most of whom were German-speaking, also collaborated with publication efforts of other German-speaking colleagues. Thus, in his conversation with leaders of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party in Mexico in March 1938 Trotsky noted that "The German sections of Switzerland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia have established a theoretical monthly, *Der Einzige Weg* . . ." ¹¹

The Swiss Trotskyists of the 1930s had more or less close relations with the International Secretariat. There was a representative of the Marxist Action of Zürich at the 1936 international Trotskyist conference. A Swiss delegate from Basel also participated in the youth meeting which took place soon after that is meeting.¹²

Although there were apparently no Swiss delegates to the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in September 1938, there was recognition there of the affiliation of the Swiss group with the international movement. Marxistische Aktion was officially reported to be a "fraternal" member of the group.¹³ International Secretary Pierre Naville reported to the meeting the exist-

tence of the Swiss affiliate, but did not provide any figures as to how many members it had, as he did with most of the other sections.¹⁴ It is clear that the MAS remained quite small during the 1930s. Marquis estimates that "it never consisted of more than two dozen militants."¹⁵

With the seizure of Austria by the Nazis in March 1938, the dissident Austrian Trotskyist leader, Josef Frey, fled to Switzerland. He soon gained considerable influence within the small Swiss Trotskyist group, as a consequence of which, according to Rodolphe Prager, the relations of the MAS with the International Secretariat were considerably disturbed. This situation continued for several years.¹⁶

With the outbreak of World War II, the publication of *Trotz Alledem* was apparently suspended, but its place was taken by the sporadically appearing underground periodical *Informations briefe fur revolutionare Politik*, three issues of which appeared between December 1939 and April 1940. It was edited by Josef Steiger, Walter Nelz, and René Dorizzi, a Trotskyist from Genève, and about six hundred copies were distributed.

Jean-François Marquis has said of this periodical, and of the general attitude of MAS during this period: "This bulletin, published and distributed clandestinely, continued to defend a revolutionary Marxist position with regard to the Swiss and international situations. This was shown by the maintenance of a firm revolutionary antimilitarist position which refused all support to national defense and all confidence in the bourgeoisie in defending Switzerland against an eventual menace from Nazi Germany."¹⁷

The publication of this underground periodical brought severe reprisals from the Swiss government. In June 1940 sixteen Trotskyists were arrested. They were apparently held without trial until March 1942, when thirteen of them, including Walter Nelz, Josef Steiger, and René Dorizzi were brought before a military court in Luzern.

Nelz was sentenced to two years in jail, Steiger and Dorizzi to one year each, and others were given shorter sentences. They were convicted of "exhortation and instigation of violation of military discipline."¹⁸

It was 1943 before there was any renewal of activity among the Swiss Trotskyists and even then it had to be "semi-legal." The MAS was finally able in the summer of 1945 to reestablish contacts with the Fourth International. In October of the same year a member of MAS was accepted into the European Executive Committee which was by that time functioning in Paris.¹⁹ After the First International Conference of the FI in March 1946, Heinrich Buchbinder of the Swiss group became a member of the new International Executive Committee.²⁰

Proletarische Aktion

Establishment of Proletarische Aktion

During the last years of World War II the Swiss Trotskyist movement reached a low point. Marquis has commented that it consisted "essentially of four persons." This tiny group engaged in a great deal of soul searching and "internal discussion," resulting in the year and a half before February 1945 in the exchange of some 800 typewritten pages of "internal texts and contributions" by the members of MAS.²¹

Some of the old-timers drifted away from the movement. Walter Nelz lapsed into inactivity. Dorizzi quit the Trotskyists to join, in Zürich, the Socialist youth group, SAJ (Socialistische Arbeit-jugend), and became bitterly anti-Trotskyist. However, those who remained still continued to have some contacts both among the Communists and among members of the SAJ. By early 1945 they had organized a number of "formation courses," in which individual MAS members expounded to small groups of three to five people basic Trotskyist ideas and doctrines. As Marquis has noted, "in this period the MAS concentrated on the work of individual

contacts, of formation and of internal debate, but judged that the hour was premature for public appearance."²²

It was exactly at that point, early in 1945, that the Swiss Trotskyists were presented with a new chance to expand, at least modestly, their influence and membership. A group of young people, including Othmar Hauser, Kurt Hildebrand, and Walter Kern, had recently broken away from the Freie Jugend, a public group which had been established by the outlawed Communist Party during the war. This group, together with Dorizzi, began late in 1945 to publish a new left-wing periodical, *Proletarische Aktion* (PA).

The Trotskyists of MAS immediately approached the group putting out the new paper. However, their former comrade, Dorizzi, was very strongly opposed to allowing the Trotskyists to participate in the periodical and the activities surrounding it, as a consequence of which none of the material the Trotskyists sent for inclusion in the first issue of PA in fact appeared.

By the time of the appearance of the second issue, however, the MAS's work of indoctrination of members of the Freie Jugend had paid off. Starting with issue number two, the Trotskyists were "able to participate fully in the elaboration of the periodical."²³

In the spring of 1946 another block in the way of total Trotskyist control of PA developed. Kurt Hildebrand and Othmar Hauser developed ideological and organizational differences with MAS. These centered on two issues: the validity of revolutionaries working within the trade union movement (which, of course, the Trotskyists upheld), and the Trotskyist categorization of the Soviet Union as a "degenerated workers state" (which Hildebrand in particular rejected, arguing that the USSR was "capitalist"). However, this conflict ended when Hildebrand retired from the periodical in May 1946, and Hauser greatly reduced his activity in the group at about the same time.²⁴

By that time *Proletarische Aktion* had become for the Trotskyists their principal ve-

hicle for resuming open political activity. They were firmly determined to control the group if it was at all possible to do so. Thus, a meeting of MAS on October 18, 1946, resolved that "the editorship of PA must be composed in its majority of us, or we shall retire from it." As Marquis has commented, "MAS had decided to go forward to take control of the PA and not be paralyzed any longer by debates with the old responsible editors."²⁵

The conclusive step in assuring MAS control of PA was the establishment of a formal organization, also called Proletarische Aktion, at a meeting on November 18, 1946. Hildebrand and Hauser did not participate in that session. Of the seven that did, Alfred Fischer, Walter Hasler, Josef Steiger, Heinrich Buchbinder, and Rudolf Stertler were certainly members of MAS. Marquis was not sure whether Walter Kern and Ernst Vollenweider, who also attended, were members of MAS or not. As he commented: "That assembly marks then the definitive taking of control by MAS of PA. It marks the beginning of a new stage in the development of PA."²⁶

Until that time the PA group was centered solely in Zürich. However, in the spring of 1947 MAS members in the cities of Winterthur and Basel established local organizations of Proletarische Aktion in those two places. Five members established the group in Winterthur, and seven that of Basel.²⁷

PA thus became in some sense a "national" organization. In the years following the founding meeting of November 1946 the group held two national conferences. The first met in Zürich on June 29, 1947. There is no indication of how many people attended that meeting, but Marquis noted that it adopted a nine-point resolution "which presents a synthetic panorama of the Swiss situation as well as an explanation of the necessity for constructing a new revolutionary party in Switzerland and in the world."

The second national conference of PA was held in Winterthur on June 12, 1949. That meeting formally adopted the title Proletarische Aktion der Schweiz for the group.

This second meeting also received a report on the growth of the organization: "Proletarische Aktion has developed during the scarcely two and a half years of its existence from a small group of less than a dozen comrades to a large propagandist group. Reverses have not been lacking; many of the comrades who were formerly in the front rank have become fatigued . . . But if one considers the situation . . . we can have, in view of our state of development, justified hope in the future."²⁸

During this same period, MAS controlled another organization in addition to PA. This was the Sozialistischer Arbeiter Jugend (SAJ). This was the name of the Socialist Party's youth group, into which members of the MAS had infiltrated. In November 1947 the national leadership of the SAJ expelled the Karl Liebknecht branch in Zürich, the president of which was a member of MAS. Those expelled were supported by the SAJ branch in Schaffhausen. Together, the Zürich and Schaffhausen groups formed their own youth organization, which also used the name Sozialistische Arbeiter Jugend. They were joined subsequently by a group from Basel. The Trotskyists' SAJ published for some years, with more or less regularity, a periodical, *Gegen den Strom*.²⁹

The MAS and Proletarische Aktion

During most of its existences Proletarische Aktion was the legal "front" for the clandestine Trotskyist group Marxistische Aktion der Schweiz, which was affiliated with the Fourth International. There were undoubtedly several reasons for MAS maintaining this two-tiered level of activity. One was certainly the experience of governmental persecution during World War II and the fear that with the adoption of rather severe legislation "for the protection of the State" after the war, they might at any time be again subject to such action by the government.

Even more important, according to Jean-François Marquis, was the "catastrophic"

point of view adopted by MAS right after the war. This position was shared by the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, the French Trotskyites, and the Fourth International in general. The MAS maintained that "the Second World War had not terminated and in all likelihood it would be continued in the form of a confrontation between, on the one hand, all the imperialist powers, and on the other, the Soviet Union . . ."³⁰

In addition, as time went on a more or less natural division of labor developed between the two groups. The PA spoke up principally on Swiss issues and MAS dealt particularly with international problems and relations with the Fourth International.³¹

In view of its lingering fear of government persecution MAS sought to limit this possibility. Thus, an internal document of MAS in 1948 noted that "PA is an organization which appears in a legal manner. . . . The revolutionary critique and propaganda of PA, both in the interior and the exterior must as a consequence be submitted to certain limits."³²

In order to assure continued control of Proletarische Aktion by MAS, the members of the latter formed a fraction within PA. According to a MAS internal document of 1946, "They are submitted . . . to the discipline of MAS and carry out their fraction work under the control of the leadership of MAS." This same document said that the MAS members in PA had to concern themselves with four things: "to conserve effective control of that organization," and consequently to limit recruiting to PA so as not to endanger MAS control of it; to train politically new PA members; to recruit new members for MAS; and constantly to critique PA policy, so as to avoid "left centrist deviations from the correct proletarian and revolutionary line."³³

The previously cited 1948 MAS internal document stated that "PA is an instrument of MAS." At the same time it warned against "mechanical" application of MAS policy in such a way as to arouse resentment on the

part of non-Trotskyist leaders and members of the group that they were being "manipulated."³⁴

The Nature and Activities of Proletarische Aktion

Jean-François Marquis has made a detailed analysis of the relatively limited amount of information available about the membership and activities of Proletarische Aktion. He reached certain general conclusions about them. He noted that "the first undeniable fact is that after the foundation of PA at the end of '46, until 1949 there was without question a geographical extension of this organization. From Zürich it extended to Winterthur, second industrial center of the canton, and to Basel, second industrial city in Switzerland . . . outside of this region, this organization is totally absent."

His second conclusion was that "PA remained a very small organization." It grew from seven members in 1946 to twenty-nine in 1949, which represented "a certain growth." He estimated that there were by 1949 some nine to fifteen members in Zürich, eleven in Winterthur, three in Schaffhausen, and "a minimum of half a dozen in Basel." He added, "One can certainly add between thirty and forty sympathizers, and at most two dozen youths organized in the SAJ," and that "PA represents in the labor movement a very minority current, which had, at a high maximum, one hundred persons."³⁵

Another conclusion Marquis reached was that "its strong working-class base can never be denied: between 1947 and 1949 about two thirds of its members and sympathizers were unionized. Also, it was always true that between 27 and 29 percent of members and sympathizers of PA were also members of the SP or LP [the Communist Party], with those belonging to the SP being more numerous." However, its representation in the unions and traditional parties "was not sufficient to give it sufficient credibility to

permit it to group around itself a significant number of workers desirous of carrying out a more combative policy. . . ."

Finally, Marquis concluded that "after a short period of relative growth, and above all of geographic expansion, PA rapidly attained a level which it could not surpass."³⁶

Much of the activity of PA centered on publication and distribution of *Proletarische Aktion*. Marquis concluded that the more or less regular number of copies printed was about 1,000. It appeared in different forms between 1945 and 1949—in the beginning as a mimeographed publication, subsequently as a printed periodical. Although the larger part of the space was taken up with Swiss events and issues, almost 40 percent dealt with international questions.³⁷

The members of PA were also active in the trade union movement. They first had the perspective of organizing "opposition" groups in trade unions throughout the labor movement. They were successful in penetrating only a very limited number of organizations. These were principally the Metal Workers Federation, particularly in Schaffhausen, and the Construction Workers. The latter union was the only one in which they had enough strength, or individuals of sufficient influence, to have representation at union national congresses.³⁸

Subsequent History of Proletarische Aktion

As we have noted, the apogee of influences and activity of the Proletarische Aktion was in 1949. The organization continued to exist for a number of years after that.

A conference of the PA in Zürich in March 1950 decided for the first time to carry on an electoral campaign in municipal elections on April 15. Running under the name "Socialist Labor List," the PA candidates received only 611 votes, or 1.9 percent. This was a great disappointment to the PA mem-

bers, who had hopes of electing some candidates.

However, the periodical *Proletarische Aktion*, in its issue of December 1950, launched a call for "a real socialist workers party." To this end a conference met on January 13, 1951, and adopted "a very long political platform for the foundation of this new organization." Also, the PA entered into discussion with several other leftist groups concerning the possibility of forming a united far left organization. To this end, it negotiated with groups in Genève and Basel, but nothing came of these discussions.³⁹

The call of PA for a new far left party was followed up on June 17, 1951, with a meeting which established a new organization, the Sozialistische Arbeiter Konferenz (SAK). In conformity with this change of name of the political organization, the name of the periodical was also changed. From the first number of 1952 it was known as *Das Arbeiterwort*.

In April 1953 the SAK changed its name once again, to Sozialistische Arbeiterbundes (SAB). This new group decided to launch a campaign for a legal minimum wage. To that end it succeeded in bringing about referenda on the issue in the cantons of Zürich and Basel. About 36 percent of the voters favored the initiative in Zürich, where it was supported only by SAB; in Basel, where it also had the backing of the Communist Party (officially the Swiss Party of Labor—PSDT), it received 40 percent of the votes.

As Marquis has noted, "these efforts did not permit this organization at any time to become the third party of the Swiss labor movement, the tendency being rather towards stagnation, then to a slow decline, which is explained in the first place by the general political context of the '50s, very unfavorable to the labor movement."

The fortunes of SAB seemed to revive slightly at the time of the Khrushchev speech to the twentieth congress of the CPSU and the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. At that time SAB established contact with a

number of important disaffected Communists who left the PSDT, and organized some public debates with them. However, those people ended up joining the Socialists rather than becoming Trotskyists.⁴⁰

The Trotskyists became very active in the effort, launched in 1958, to call a referendum on the question of banning the atomic bomb in Switzerland. One of its principal figures was Heinrich Buchbinder. When the referendum was finally held in 1962 it received the support of 35 percent of the voters. However, as Marquis has noted, activity around this issue "did not leave much room for the SAB as such." As a consequence, by the time the ban-the-bomb campaign was completed "the SAB virtually did not exist as an organization any longer."⁴¹ Although a Swiss became a member of the United Secretariat when it was established in 1963, there did not in fact exist a functioning Trotskyist organization in Switzerland at that time.⁴² Half a decade was to pass before Swiss Trotskyism would be revived.

Origins and Early History of Ligue Marxiste Révolutionnaire

Unlike the MAS, which had largely been concentrated in the German-speaking parts of Switzerland, the revived Trotskyist movement originated in the French-speaking region. Subsequently, it was to spread throughout the country.

The events of 1968 gave rise to the new Swiss Trotskyist movement, which found its original support mainly among student youth. Two occurrences, the May uprising in France and the August invasion of Czechoslovakia by the forces of the Warsaw Pact, provided the issues around which a new Trotskyist movement was born in Switzerland.

Writing several years later, some of those who participated in the founding of the new movement noted that these two events raised serious questions in the minds of some of the younger members of the PSDT

affiliate in the canton of Vaud, known locally as POP. They were already deeply concerned with such questions as "how to struggle against imperialism, how to provide concrete aid to the struggles of the peoples of Indochina, what is the value of the policy of pacific coexistence, what is the significance of the Sino-Soviet conflict?"

However, "to all of these questions the events of May '68 in France and those of Czechoslovakia in that same year, added a much more profound question . . . [sic] had the French Communist Party betrayed the hopes of May and with what value could one credit the Socialist model of the USSR which needed tanks to impose itself?" These questions brought this group of young Communists in Vaud "to question fundamentally the traditional political field."

They soon found a new set of answers to their questions. "For the great majority of us, the discovery at this point of the answers to and analyses of all these questions made by the revolutionary Marxists, by the Trotskyist movement, opened at last a way out. Feverishly fighting against the revulsion which "Trotskyism" inspired in us, revulsion with which we were inoculated by the long association with Stalinism, we relearned with stupor the history of the labor movement, beyond the formal Stalinist version."⁴³

The young dissidents, although still "an ultra minority," organized a tendency within the POP of Vaud. They held extensive discussions among themselves of "the whole policy of the PSDT," and finally in July 1969 decided to publish a series of documents for circulation within the party "on the trade union question, immigrant workers, the Czech affair, the Socialist party, and the 'popular front.'"

They hoped to stimulate a general debate on these issues within the Communist ranks. However, the secretary general of the PSDT, Jean Vincent, refused to allow any such general discussion. In a circular addressed to the party in Vaud and Genève he

accused the young dissidents of formulating the "abstract and sterile schemas of Trotskyite doctrinaires, cut off from the people and from reality."⁴⁴

This attitude of the PSDT leadership confirmed the growing suspicion of the young rebels that they could not bring about any changes within the Stalinist ranks. By then numbering about forty people, mainly among the youth, they made one more effort to circularize the PSDT membership setting forth their position on various issues. Then, in October 1969, the leadership of POP decreed the expulsion of five of the principal dissidents, denouncing them as "excited youngsters who want to launch a South American guerrilla in the forests of Jura." Soon after the expulsion of the five "ring-leaders," the other members of the faction withdrew from POP. Thus, "The Ligue Marxiste Révolutionnaire was created."⁴⁵

The new organization quickly entered into contact with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and its affiliates in neighboring countries, particularly France. Early in 1970 something of a cause célèbre was aroused by the arrest of French Trotskyist leader Hubert Krivine, and two LMR leaders, teachers in Lausanne, Bernard Bachelard and Olivier Parriaux.⁴⁶ Later in that year the LMR organized a public discussion in Lausanne of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, presided over by Charles-André Udry, member of the Politburo of the LMR, and with Livio Maitan, member of the United Secretariat as the main speaker.⁴⁷

The Ligue Marxiste Révolutionnaire held its first national congress in April 1971. It was reported that "about 150" delegates attended, from Lausanne, Vevey, Nyon, Neuchâtel, and Bern-Jura. During the congress a group in Genève joined, becoming the Genève section of the young organization. There were "about twenty observers" also present from Zürich and Fribourg in German-speaking Switzerland.

This congress adopted the statutes of the organization. Apparently much of the dis-

discussion on this issue centered on whether there was a need for a centralized form of organization. This probably reflected the strong historical influence of Swiss federalism on all of the country's political organizations including the Socialist and Communist parties. Reporting on this discussion, the LMR's paper later noted, "The question of centralizing the LMR organizationally is only a consequence of the need for centralizing it politically. This political need is rooted in a basic understanding of the function of the revolutionary party."

There was considerable discussion at the congress of work within the organized labor movement. Undoubtedly reflecting the social composition of the group, "the congress concluded that the organization's current main area of work in building the revolutionary party is the university and high-school arena. To guide this activity, it set a line of 'struggle against the class university.'"⁴⁸

Within six months of its first congress the LMR had established a branch in Zürich, the country's largest industrial city and center of Germanophone Switzerland. It had also achieved the status of a "sympathizing organization" of the United Secretariat.⁴⁹

In May 1973 the Revolutionary Marxist League held its second congress. It was reported in *Intercontinental Press* subsequently that the meeting dealt with two basic things: "1. The political situation and the current tasks of the LMR, and 2. The problems of national organizational structure in the light of the organization's growth during the last two years—from French-speaking to German-speaking Switzerland (geographical extension), and from students to Swiss and immigrant—Italian and Spanish—workers (social implantation)."⁵⁰

The second congress of the LMR was presented with a number of documents, including one analyzing the Swiss economic situation and the labor movement and the supposed perspectives for Marxist revolutionaries. A second analysis dealt with the

trade union movement in Switzerland. Other subjects of debate and resolution included that of provincial localism, the relations of Switzerland with the European Economic Community, and ways to combat Swiss military preparedness.⁵¹

From Ligue Marxiste Révolutionnaire to Parti Socialist Ouvrier

In February 1976 the LMR held its Third Congress. It adopted a Thesis on the Political Situation of Switzerland which first sketched the economic crisis in Switzerland and in the capitalist world in general which had commenced in 1973-74, and then analyzed the political changes provoked by this crisis. It paid particular attention to the "reformist" parties, among which it included not only the Socialist Party and Party of Labor (PSDT) but also several small splinter groups; it also sketched the situation of the "revolutionary Left."

This document, in its discussion of "Our Central Political Task," launched a call for "a new orientation in the labor movement: Unity in Action!" It called for the formation on a local basis of a variety of different rank and file committees to foster a more militant attitude among the workers. It ended with a paragraph underscoring the role of the Fourth International in the allegedly rising tide of militancy in Europe, and of the Swiss section within the International.⁵²

At the time of the Third Congress the Revolutionary Marxist League had local sections in twenty-one towns and cities in French, German, and Italian Switzerland.⁵³

The question of unity in the labor movement and the Left, toward instilling greater militancy in the Swiss working class, was again a major question at the LMR's Fourth Congress in 1978. The main resolution of that meeting once more stressed what the League had emphasized since its inception—the need to end the "labor peace" and class collaboration which had been characteristic of the country virtually since the

end of the World War II. The resolution emphasized particularly the need to involve workers loyal to the Socialist Party and belonging to its trade union group in militant struggles wherever possible.

The Revolutionary Marxist League, which late in 1980 became the Socialist Workers Party (Socialistische Arbeiterpartei—SAP) engaged in a wide variety of different activities. From time to time it became involved in elections. The major document of its Fourth Congress explained that "while the LMR does not present candidates in elections, it is nonetheless ready to call for a vote, according to tactical conditions, for organizations of the labor movement, from the point of view that they express a minimum of opposition by the workers to the bourgeoisie."⁵⁴

In conformity with this line, LMR supported a Socialist Party candidate in Zürich cantonal elections early in 1977.⁵⁵ In the following year the LMR itself ran candidates in cantonal elections in Neuchâtel where they received an average of 10.6 percent of the total vote.⁵⁶

LMR/SAP participated in the 1975, 1979, 1983, and 1985 elections. They ran candidates in twelve cantons. They had their best showing in the town of Bellevaux in Vaud (Waadt) canton, where they received 7 percent of the total vote in 1983. Overall, they received 0.4 percent in 1975, 0.4 percent again in 1979, and 0.6 percent in 1983, getting a total of 12,594 votes in the last of these years.⁵⁷

The SAP did not win members in any cantonal assemblies until 1985. However, Jo Lang, a leader of SAP in Zug, reported early in 1984 that "we have real possibilities in the cantons of Basel, Fribourg, Zug, Ticino, and Bern." The Trotskyists did elect members of city councils in Zug, Biel, and Chur, as part of a coalition in those towns.⁵⁸

In March 1985 SAP elected its first cantonal deputy from the Baden district of the canton of Aargau, the seat of the Brown Boverly Co. Hansruedi Bolliger of SAP was

victorious on a coalition ticket of the SAP and the Greens. At the same time they elected new city counselors in Chiasso, La-Chaux-de-Fonds, and Bern, as well as increasing their representation in Zug and Biel. In some cases the successful SAP candidates ran on lists of their own party, in other instances as nominees in a coalition. However, SAP had not been able to elect anyone in Vaud and Genève, where their membership was largest, because in those cases at least 7 percent of the total vote was necessary for election.⁵⁹

Jo Lang, Trotskyist member of the city council of Zug, explained how he functioned as a Trotskyist member of that body: "My role . . . is radical opposition (often with some left-wingers of the SP with whom I collaborate quite intensively). Because the bourgeois parties have a majority, it's almost impossible to win a vote." He added that "Last year I intervened about seventy times, about thirty different subjects."⁶⁰

The LMR/SAP developed a vigorous periodical press. The first publication to appear was the French-language newspaper, *La Brèche*. By the early 1980s *La Brèche* was appearing in Lausanne every two weeks, a German fortnightly paper *Bresche* was appearing in Zürich, and an Italian language paper *Rosso* was coming out monthly in Lugano. In addition a magazine *Maulwurf* was being published in Basel by the youth organization of the Swiss Trotskyists. Together with the Spanish Liga Comunista Revolucionaria, the LMR/SAP also published a periodical in Spanish, *Rojo*, apparently to be read by Spanish migrants in Switzerland.

Over the years the LMR/SAP put out a more or less constant stream of pamphlets. Some of these were made up of resolutions of their various congresses. Others dealt with specific issues and campaigns with which the Trotskyists were concerned at various times. They and the group's periodical indicated the range of their activities.

The Swiss Trotskyists were continuously concerned with and carried on campaigns

concerning international issues. Thus, in 1975 the LMR issued a pamphlet, *Sieg für Indochina*, on the conflict in the three countries of that area.⁶¹ A few years later, in October 1982, the Socialist Workers Party issued a pamphlet, *Guerre et Révolution au Salvador*.⁶² At about the same time, *La Brèche* carried major articles on the Salvadorean situation in two issues,⁶³ and *Rosso* had an article on the subject.⁶⁴ *Maulwurf* also ran an article on the same theme.⁶⁵

The Swiss Trotskyists strongly supported the Solidarity movement in Poland. Thus, shortly before the declaration of martial law in Poland *La Brèche* carried on its last page the appeal of Solidarity to the unions and workers parties in the West.⁶⁶ Two months later *Bresche* had an article on the repercussions in East Germany of Solidarity and its suppression. *Rosso* carried an article in November 1962 on Solidarity preparations for a general strike.⁶⁷

A constant issue of concern and agitation of the LMR-SAP was that of the rights and interests of immigrant workers in Switzerland. As a consequence of the long post-World War II prosperity in Switzerland, large numbers of workers, particularly from Italy and Spain, migrated at least temporarily to that country. As a pamphlet put out by the SAP in 1981 stated, "Our Party since its founding in 1969 has given particular importance to the struggle for the rights of the immigrant."⁶⁸

Women's rights were also a frequent preoccupation of the Swiss Trotskyists of the 1970s and 1980s. On at least two occasions they took an active part in campaigns for popular initiative (referenda) on these issues. One of these, in October 1978, was for "the rights of motherhood,"⁶⁹ and the second early in 1980 was one on "equal rights for men and women."⁷⁰ In its November 1982 issue *Rosso* carried an article sketching the participation of SAP in the struggle for a law legalizing abortion and providing government financial aid to those women seeking one.

Understandably, the Swiss Trotskyists were actively concerned with issues directly affecting the workers. Thus, the LMR participated in 1976 in an unsuccessful popular initiative to establish by law the forty hour week.⁷¹ Six years later, in November 1982, the Socialist Workers Party joined with the PSDT and several smaller left-wing unions in urging the principal Swiss trade union group, the USS, to launch another campaign for a popular referendum on the issue.⁷²

The LMR/SAP press carried substantial news on trade union activity although there is no indication that the Trotskyists were of significant influence in the organized labor movement. In June 1984 the party organized a conference of its trade union activists at which the attendance was reported to have been about one hundred. It discussed particular problems presented to the union movement by "new technology."⁷³

In 1976 the LMR published a pamphlet against certain proposals for "co-participation" along the West German model which had been put forward by some workers groups. It offered, in contrast, the slogans, "Direct action in the class struggle for control of production by the workers" and "Struggle for socialist planning. . ."⁷⁴

In 1979 LMR published a pamphlet on the printing industry and the growing crisis in it due to technological changes. Among other things it called for unification of the unions in the industry, and a struggle for a reduced work week as steps towards dealing with the problem.⁷⁵

In 1980 SAP launched a campaign to have a popular initiative for the establishment of state-run vocational training schools, with room for at least 10,000 students. It published an extensive pamphlet outlining the need for such a program, and some exchange of correspondence on the issue which it had had with some trade union organizations.⁷⁶

Other Trotskyist Groups

The LMR/SAP existed after 1969 virtually free of competition from any other group in

Switzerland claiming affiliation with International Trotskyism. Jacques Schneider of SAP wrote late in 1982 that "our organization is the affiliate of the United Secretariat. There are no other national organizations claiming loyalty to Trotskyism. It seems that, in the latest period, a small group of Lambertist activists has started in Genève. It does not seem to have any activity beyond that city."⁷⁷

The name of the Lambertist group in Switzerland was the Groupe Trotskyste de Suisse. It held its first congress in June 1981. It published a newspaper, *Action Socialiste*, which concentrated much of its attention on the development of a left-wing in the Swiss Socialist Party. The Groupe Trotskyste was particularly active in the University of Genève, where it was in 1984 running a Fourth International forum.⁷⁸

In 1984 another small dissident group appeared as the result of a minor split in SAP. Four members of the party who had denounced its policies of supporting Polish Solidarity and calling for withdrawal of missiles from both East and West Germany, and had criticized its allegedly tepid support for Central American revolutionaries, were expelled. They immediately announced formation of a new group, Spartacist, which affiliated with the international Spartacist tendency, (*sic*). The new group was apparently centered in Schaffhausen.⁷⁹

Conclusion

Swiss Trotskyism has had what might be called an intermittent history. Although it began to establish a base in German-speaking parts of the country before World War II, it was all but exterminated by internal dissension and government persecution during that war. Revived for a few years, again principally in German-speaking parts of the country, and with principally a working-class membership, once again it virtually ceased to exist by the end of the 1950s. When it was revived once more in the late 1960s,

Swiss Trotskyism was different from what it had previously been in several respects: it began being stronger in the French-speaking parts of the country rather than in the German ones, it succeeded in expanding into three different linguistic areas, and its social base was different, being particularly strong among students and middle-class young people instead of being mainly proletarian.

There is no precise information concerning the number of people who have been active in the Swiss Trotskyist movement. There is indication that at the time of its expansion after World War II it had considerably less than one hundred members. The revived movement after the late 1980s certainly had a substantially larger membership than that, although exactly how much larger is not clear. Soon after changing its name to Socialist Workers Party the group reported in early 1981 that it had locals in eighteen towns and cities, most of them in German-speaking Switzerland although at least four were in French-speaking areas and one in the Italian-speaking region of Lugano.⁸⁰

Trotskyism in Switzerland has never developed significant influence in the organized labor movement. It has certainly not been able to challenge Socialist Party control of the principal trade union organization, or the Socialist Party's very strong dominance in the country's political left; or for that matter, to dislodge the Stalinists' PSDT from its status as the largest and most influential element on the far left.

Swiss Trotskyism seems to have suffered only marginally from the impact of the various splits within the international movement. At the time of the original split in the Fourth International in the early 1980s, what Swiss Trotskyist movement there was stayed with the International Secretariat. When the movement revived in the late 1960s it was from its inception allied with the United Secretariat, and no other international Trotskyist group appears to have gained any real foothold in the country.

Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

The Trotskyist International Liaison Committee was formed as a consequence of a split in the Healyite International Committee of the Fourth International. In 1974 the British affiliate of the Healyite group, the Workers Revolutionary Party, expelled a large part of its trade union base. Led by Alan Thomett, a figure of some importance among the auto workers, those who were expelled set up their own organization in Great Britain.

The Thomett group also sought contacts in other countries. From these contacts there emerged the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee. By 1982 it was said to have affiliates in Italy, Turkey, Belgium, Australia, Denmark, Switzerland, and the United States, as well as Great Britain. With the exception of the British group the national affiliates remained small, even in terms of Trotskyist organizations.¹

Tunisian Trotskyism

The only Trotskyist tendency to appear in Tunisia has been one which has been associated with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. In January 1980 the group, then known as the Groupe Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs (GRT), joined with the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire to denounce French support for the Bourgiba regime in Tunisia. Then a year later, when the Bourgiba government began a policy of "liberalization," allowing the legalization of opposition parties, relaxing controls over the labor movement and removing from office some of the most unpopular of the leaders of the government party, the Trotskyists, now the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire (GMR) insisted that these actions were being taken "on instructions of imperialism" and warned of their severe limitations.¹

Shortly afterward GMR published in the first issue of its periodical *Mal-Amal* a call for the formation of a labor party in Tunisia. It said that because of the circumstances of the moment, "This party of workers cannot be a revolutionary party. . . . But it must not be a reformist party. . . . We are today having preliminary discussions on this initiative which we propose. Revolutionary militants and the trade union vanguard must discuss it."²

At the time of the first contested election in two decades, in November 1981, no such labor party had appeared. The Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire called for its supporters to abstain after they were unable to organize "lists of workers unity and independence which would have undertaken a campaign around fundamental demands of the working class." They rejected giving support to candidates of the Communist Party of Tunisia (PCT) because of "its policy of

Trotskyism in Turkey

class collaboration," adding that "a call for a PCR vote could only sow illusions about the nature of the regime."³

After a week of rioting over government-decreed price increases in late December 1983 and early January 1984, the Tunisian Trotskyists, by then renamed Groupe Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs and described as a "sympathizing organization" of USEC, issued a proclamation dated January 6, 1984. It was headed with the statement "The Government has retreated, the struggle must continue!" It called for immediate raising of the state of emergency decreed by the government, freeing of all those jailed during the riots, and dissolution of the political police. It also called for freezing prices of all goods of prime necessity, and for the end of the government's austerity program.⁴

Information on the possible existence of a Trotskyist organization of some kind in Turkey is scanty. In the early 1980s the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee did claim to have a Turkish group associated with it.¹ Also, in December 1982 it was announced that three people—Sadi Ozansu, Orhan Dilber, and Ahmet Mohittin Karkin—had been sentenced to jail for eight years for "attempting to create a Trotskyist organization." Sadi Ozansu, a university faculty member, had previously been condemned to a period in jail for having translated Ernest Mandel's *Introduction to Marxism*.²

United Secretariat of the Fourth International: Its Origins

The split in the Fourth International which took place in 1952-53 had hardly been consummated when steps began to be taken which, in the eyes of some of the people involved, were designed to try to reestablish the unity of the international Trotskyist movement. A leading role in this process was taken by the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) of Ceylon which, although staying in the International Secretariat of the Fourth International of the Pabloites, shared many of the views of the rival group organized in the International Committee of the Fourth International. It was to take a decade before even partial reunification was to prove possible, and even then the process was to be far from complete.

The First Parity Commission

Leslie Goonewardene of the LSSP had meetings with Gerry Healy of the International Committee, apparently soon after the Fourth World Congress of the Pabloites, in July 1954. Out of this discussion came the decision to establish a Parity Commission of the two groups. As Fred Feldman has noted, "To Goonewardene, this was a step toward reunification, but for Healy, the Parity Commission was intended to win over the Ceylonese and thus place the onus of blame for the continuation of the split on Pablo."¹

This Parity Commission soon became a bone of contention within the International Committee. Although they had gone along with its establishment, the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party (often referred to in the relevant documents as "the New Zealand section") quickly came to the con-

clusion that the Parity Commission was a bad idea. After some exchange of correspondence they succeeded in convincing Gerry Healy. The French affiliate of the International Committee had been opposed to the Commission from the beginning.

The only leading figure in the International Committee who remained convinced that the exchange of documents between the Pabloites and the International Committee through the vehicle of a Parity Commission was the best possible way of getting the IC points of view presented to the leaders of the possibly sympathetic groups which still remained in the Pabloite organization—particularly the Ceylonese—was Peng Shu-tse, the exiled leader of the Chinese Trotskyists. He had closer contacts with the LSSP than did his European and U.S. colleagues. Peng continued to fight for the maintenance of the Parity Commission.

After about a year and a half of discussion, a meeting of the International Committee in Paris on November 7-8, 1955 decided to withdraw from the Parity Commission. The decision was taken by a vote of five to one, with the French, British, Swiss, German, and Dutch sections voting in favor of withdrawal and only the Chinese delegate opposing the idea.² Further efforts of Peng Shu-tse to change his colleagues' minds were to no avail.³

In 1957 there were further discussions looking to the possible reunion of the two factions of international Trotskyism. Pierre Frank has noted in discussing the International Secretariat's Fifth World Congress that "in the course of preparing for the congress, an attempt at rapprochement with the International Committee was made, with a view to reunification. . . ." But, "This attempt at rapprochement failed, mainly because distrust on the organizational level persisted."⁴ Some controversy continued on whether the British Section of the IC or the Socialist Workers Party was more responsible for the failure of this attempt at reunification.⁵

The 1962-63 Parity Commission and Its Results

The last attempt to try to reunite the Fourth International of the Pablo followers and the International Committee, which was partially successful, began in February 1962. In that month the National Committee of the Socialist Labor League, Healy-directed British affiliate of the International Committee, passed a motion calling for "the IC to approach the IS with a view to the setting up of a subcommittee consisting of three members from the International Committee and the International Secretariat. The purpose of this committee would be to arrange an exchange of internal material on international problems among all the sections affiliated to both the sections. It is to be hoped that such a step would encourage discussion, and the subcommittee could arrange for the regular publication of an international bulletin dealing with this. Eventually, the subcommittee would prepare a summary report on the area of agreement and differences between the two bodies."

This resolution was unanimously accepted by the IC and agreed to by the International Secretariat. The first meeting of the so-called Parity Committee took place on September 2, 1962.⁶

This first meeting agreed to invite all national sections of both organizations to participate in the discussion which was being launched, and to invite the Posadas group, which had already broken away from the International Secretariat, to also take part. It agreed to hold meetings every month and to organize joint activities particularly around the question of getting the Soviet leaders to "rehabilitate" Trotsky, and the issue of the Angolan revolution then in progress. The meeting also urged the end of all factional activity within both groups.

In addition, the September 2, 1962 Parity Committee meeting had before it two sets of proposals, from the IC and the IS. The former was more or less what was adopted

by the meeting, with the addition of a proviso that "the Parity Committee agrees to work for the calling of a preliminary international congress during the summer of 1964. The purpose of this congress would be to establish the political policies and the relationship of forces between the various tendencies so that discussion can proceed towards a definitive solution of the international crisis."

The International Secretariat resolution was one passed by the Twenty-third Plenum of its International Executive Committee which had taken place a few days before. The resolution expressed "its strong belief that the political and organizational conditions exist for a successful reunification. It appeals to all the Trotskyists in order that they be equal to their responsibilities and help the world movement to progress with reunified forces in the historical period of world revolution in March which will see in the coming years the progressive integration of our cadres in the mass revolutionary forces in all the continents."

Several subsequent meetings of the Parity Committee were held. It was clear from the start that different elements involved in the Parity Committee exercise had different objectives. The majority leadership in the International Secretariat—headed particularly by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank, and Livio Maitan—were anxious to reunite as much of the world Trotskyist movement as possible, as soon as possible. One minority of the International Secretariat which was against reunification had already broken away from the IS under the leadership of J. Posadas before the Parity Committee was even established. A second element of the IS headed by Michel Pablo, who was by that time in the employ of the new Algerian government of Ben Bella, had its reservations about the unity drive and formed its own tendency within the International Secretariat.

There were also differences of opinion and objectives within the International Com-

mittee. These apparently became clear at a meeting of the IC in January 1963. On the one hand the Socialist Workers Party of the United States shared the is majority's objective of rapid reunification of the world movement, bringing together as many elements as were willing to participate in the process. On the other hand another group, composed principally of the British and French sections of the International Committee, felt that the first thing necessary was a thorough discussion of the causes of the original split and a repudiation of "Pabloism" which they felt had been responsible. Possible reunification could only take place after an extensive period of discussion.

These different points of view proved irreconcilable, at least on the side of the International Committee. As a consequence there was a conference of the prounification elements of the IC in March 1963—which Joseph Hansen claimed included not only the SWP but also the Argentine, Austrian, Canadian, Chilean, Chinese, and Japanese sections—and agreed to join with the International Secretariat's sections in mounting a reunification congress, which took place in June 1963.⁸

The so-called "reunification congress" only reunified part of the international Trotskyist movement. There were important elements from both the International Secretariat forces and those of the International Committee which did not participate in this process.

The Congress of Reunification

The majority faction in the International Secretariat, and the prounification part of the International Committee each held a congress which discussed the problems and possibilities of unity of the Trotskyist movement. Both meetings approved documents which subsequently were to be adopted by the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International which was held in June 1963.

The Reunification Congress adopted the resolutions which had been previously approved. However, the faction of the International Secretariat led by Michel Pablo presented a minority resolution for discussion. Representatives of his tendency were elected as a minority in the new International Executive Committee chosen by the meeting.

A full day of the congress was devoted to discussion of the Algerian Revolution, concerning which Pablo presented a report. As Pierre Frank has noted, "The congress was unanimous in seeing important possibilities for the development of the Algerian revolution towards a socialist revolution, as had happened in Cuba, and decided to do its utmost to mobilize the International and its sections in support of the Algerian revolution."⁹

The major document adopted by the reunification congress was entitled "Dynamics of World Revolution Today." This seventeen-page document presented the basic orientation of the majority element in International Trotskyism in 1963.

The statement started by noting that "the classical schema of world revolution assumed that the victory of socialism would occur first in the most industrially developed countries, setting an example for the less developed." However, the resolution noted, "The revolution followed a more devious path than even its greatest theoreticians had expected. . . ." As a consequence, "All the victorious revolutions after 1917, including the establishment of workers' states through revolutionary upheavals in Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, and Cuba, thus took place in relatively backward countries, while the possibility of early revolutionary victory in the imperialist countries was postponed."¹⁰

Following this general line of thought the resolution claimed that "it is important to recognize that the three main forces of world revolution—the colonial revolution, the political revolution in the degenerated or de-

formed workers' states, and the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries—form a dialectical unity. Each force influences the others and receives in return powerful impulses or brakes on its own development."¹¹

After reviewing each of these aspects of the world revolution, the resolution argued:

The most probable variant in the next few years is, therefore, the following: the colonial revolution will continue, involving new countries and deepening its social character as more workers' states appear. It will not lead directly to the overthrow of capitalism in the imperialist centers but it will play a powerful role in building a new world revolutionary leadership as is already clear from the emergence of Castroist currents. The pressure of the masses in the workers' states will continue, with a tendency toward increasing mass action and the possible beginning of political revolution in several workers' states. Both these developments will favorably influence the resurgence of mass militancy among the proletariat in the imperialist countries, reinforcing a tendency stemming directly from the socio-economic mechanism of advanced capitalism and the slowing down of its rate of expansion.¹²

In its discussion of the basic issue which had split the Fourth International a decade earlier, "entrism *sui generis*," this basic document of the reunification congress would seem to have been closer to the "Pabloite" position of 1952-53 than to that of Pablo's opponents, although it was somewhat less explicit than Pablo had been. This discussion started with the claim that the Fourth International, "In its programmatic declarations and in its participation in the class struggle on a world-wide scale . . . has proved itself to be the legitimate heir and continuator of the great tradition of revolutionary Marxism. Events have proved it right on so many points that even its antago-

nists have had to borrow from its arsenal, though in a partial, one-sided or distorted way."¹³

Admitting that the FI and its sections remained relatively small, the resolution asserted that

The world Trotskyist movement has given much consideration to the problem of setting out with small forces to win the working class and organize it into a party capable of challenging the rule of the capitalist class. The over-all principle on which it has proceeded on the organizational level is . . . that a revolutionist must not permit himself to be separated from his class under any circumstances. . . . They . . . belong to the big organizations of the masses whether they be nationalistic, cultural or political in character. Insofar as possible, they advance the ideas and the program of Trotskyism among the members of these organizations and seek to recruit from them.¹⁴

They have no choice but to practice 'entryism'; that is, to participate as an integrated component in the internal life of the mass movement. . . . The purpose of 'entryism' is not to construct a 'pressure group,' as some critics have charged, but to build a mass revolutionary Marxist party in the real conditions that must be faced in a number of countries . . . for a certain stage of work, no particular alternative remains open. Owing to national peculiarities, the tactic has many variants. It must be applied with great flexibility and without dogmatism of any kind. The norm for those engaging in it is to maintain a sector of open public work, including their own Trotskyist publication.¹⁵

The document also contained a gesture in the direction of the "anti-Pablo" position which had been that of the International Committee: "The building of an alternative leadership of the working class, i.e., of new revolutionary mass parties, remains the cen-

tral task of our epoch. The problem is not that of repeating over and over again this elementary truth, but of explaining concretely how it is to be done. In fact, the building of revolutionary mass parties combines three concrete processes: the process of defending and constantly enriching the Marxist revolutionary program; of building, educating and hardening a revolutionary Marxist cadre, and of winning *mass influence* for this cadre. These three processes are dialectically intertwined. . . ."¹⁶

The resolution also reflected the close association elements of the United Secretariat either had or hoped to develop with the Algerian and Cuban revolutionary regimes. Noting that "in previous decades" failure to develop a revolutionary party before the outbreak of revolution "would signify certain defeat for the revolution," it went on to say that "because of a series of new factors, however, this is no longer necessarily the case. The example of the Soviet Union, the existence of workers' states from whom material aid can be obtained, and the relative weakening of world capitalism, have made it possible for revolutions in some instances to achieve partial successes . . . and even to go as far as the establishment of a workers state. Revolutionary Marxists in such countries face extremely difficult questions," but ". . . no choice is open to them in such situations but to participate completely and wholeheartedly in the revolution and to build the party in the very process of the revolution itself."

Finally, the resolution reiterated that "only an International based on democratic centralism, permitting different tendencies to confront each other democratically while uniting them in action, can allow experiences from all corners of the world to become properly weighed and translated into revolutionary tasks on a world scale. . . . The necessity to build a strong, democratically centralized International is underscored all the more by the present dialectical relationship between the three main sectors of the

world revolution. . . ." Presumably the conclusive argument on the issue was "that Fidel Castro, as a result of his own experience in a living revolution, today stresses the decisive importance of building Marxist-Leninist parties in all countries."¹⁷

The Latin American parties of the International Committee, which had been grouped together in the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism, did not immediately join the United Secretariat. However, "once the reunification was consummated, our tendency, SLARO, characterized it as positive, gave it critical support and began a process of discussions and negotiations. . . . Only in December 1964, when the discussions and negotiations which we had carried on for more than a year culminated, our tendency, SLARO, headed by Palabra Obrera, transformed its critical support of reunification into formal entry into the Fourth International headed by the United Secretariat."¹⁸

Conclusion

During the early 1950s the Fourth International suffered a major split, dividing it into two organizationally distinct groups. The major policy issue at the heart of this schism was the old question of "entrism," which had been a cause of controversy even when Leon Trotsky was still alive, but an entrism of a rather different type, which in most European and many Asiatic countries would have meant the virtual disappearance of any open Trotskyist organization. This policy was posited on a new perspective of a revolutionary process of "several centuries" during which leadership would be in the hands of Stalinist parties and of Stalinist-type bureaucracies in countries in which the revolution triumphed—leaving the Trotskyists, supposedly, no alternative but to work for their ideas within those parties and regimes. Undoubtedly organizational and personal issues also played important parts in 1952-53 in the split in the Fourth International.

A decade later, through the device of suspending more or less indefinitely any further discussion of the causes of the split, and including elements from the positions of both factions in a new position statement, unity of major elements of both sides was achieved. However, important parts of both international factions stayed out of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, so that "reunification" in fact resulted in there being three international faction instead of two.

The Trajectory of The United Secretariat

After June 1963, the United Secretariat (USEC) of the Fourth International remained the largest of the groups purporting to be, and to speak for, the international Trotskyist movement. It had sections in more countries than did any of its rivals. Its total membership probably exceeded that of any of the other groups, or perhaps of all of them put together.

The United Secretariat may be said to have represented "orthodox" Trotskyism after 1963. During most of the next two decades it included in its leadership more of the older generation of people whose role as important figures in the movement dated back to the days when Trotsky himself was its chief, or at least to the end of World War II, than did any of the other factions of the movement. Also, in the realm of ideas it tended to stick closer to the basic notions put forward by Trotsky than did most of its rivals.

The United Secretariat, which had been formed by bringing together two factions of the movement, continued to be the scene of conflicts between or among different "tendencies." On at least two occasions more or less significant groups broke away to form their own versions of international Trotskyism.

The 1965 World Congress

What was labelled the "Second World Congress Since Reunification and the Eighth World Congress" met in December 1965.¹ Pierre Frank has noted that in the two and a half years between the Reunification Congress and that of December 1965, the United Secretariat had been active in a variety of fields. Among these were campaigns to de-

fend Polish dissidents, particularly two young intellectuals, Modzelewski and Kuron, who issued "the first programmatic document of the antibureaucratic revolution to come out of a workers state since the days of Trotsky and the Left Opposition." It likewise publicized "left-wing" dissent within other "workers states," including the USSR itself, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The United Secretariat also maintained a constant campaign in defense of the Cuban Revolution, as well as extensive efforts on behalf of the Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco, perhaps saving him from execution through attention they were able to direct toward his case. Finally, USEC and its national sections energetically supported the Vietnamese revolution and opposed growing U.S. intervention there.²

The December 1965 World Congress was attended by more than sixty people from twenty-five countries. According to Frank it demonstrated "that the reunification had been effectively consolidated, the centrifugal forces having been largely overcome. The organization was able to turn most of the forces outward and implement its policies under more normal conditions."³

One party that had played a major role in the postwar Fourth International but which was not represented at the 1965 congress was the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon. During the previous year it had decided to enter the coalition government of Mrs. Bandaranaike, and as a consequence was officially read out of the United Secretariat.⁴

Several documents were adopted by the Second Congress After Reunification. The most significant of these was the general political resolution entitled, "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Marxists." In addition, resolutions dealing with revolution in Africa, the situation in Western Europe, and the Sino-Soviet conflict were discussed and passed.

The general political resolution began with an analysis of the economy of the capi-

talist world, noting its long period of prosperity but predicting that this was about to come to an end. It concluded: "Whatever the stopgap solutions, the imperialist economy will continue to face the dilemma: either a grave crisis of overproduction, or mounting inflation in the coming years." Furthermore, it argued, the people of the Asian and Latin American countries had shared little in the benefits of the boom then drawing to an end.

The economies of the "workers states" were pictured as having "continued to progress at annual rates of growth considerably above those of the imperialist countries on the average, experiencing difficulties but no recessions and thus showing the intrinsic superiority of a planned economy founded on the nationalization of the means of production. . . ." At the same time these countries had experienced "the slowing down in growth of national revenue . . . due to the continuing agricultural crisis and . . . difficulties in industry ascribable to the innumerable brakes characteristic of bureaucratic management."⁵

The resolution then turned to the Vietnam War: "The American aggression against Vietnam constitutes the first open imperialist attack against the territory of a workers state since the end of the Korean war. . .," and adding that this showed up "the completely illusory nature of the Khrushchev concepts of 'peaceful coexistence' and 'peaceful collaboration' with American imperialism." It argued that the Vietnam War "shows that despite the existence of nuclear arms and the threat this represents to mankind, the fate of the world in which we live will be decided by force in the international class struggle between the reactionary rulers of the dying capitalist system and the drive of the masses of humanity toward scientific economic planning and the classless social order of the future." Finally, this part of the resolution severely criticized both the Soviet and Chinese leaders for their "refusing sufficient aid to the

Democratic Republic of Vietnam and to the National Front for Liberation in South Vietnam. . . ."⁶

A section of the resolution dealing with "Colonial Revolution" noted that since the last congress, it had spread "into a series of countries (particularly Southern Arabia, Syria, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Guatemala, a number of countries in black Africa)," but that it had also "unquestionably suffered a series of grave defeats (Brazil, the Congo, Indonesia)." Each of these cases was discussed, with particular attention being given to that of the Dominican Republic.⁷

One passage in this resolution's discussion of the colonial situation foreshadowed a controversy which was to break out in USEC before its next congress and was to last for a decade: "The victory of the Cuban Revolution touched off a movement among the revolutionary vanguard in Latin America essentially based on constructing small nuclei of guerrilla fighters, isolated from the masses, as a substitute for building a new revolutionary leadership. The vanguard paid a heavy price for these adventurous experiences, which appeared in the Fidelista current itself, through the useless sacrifice of the most devoted and dynamic elements. But little by little a more mature conception of armed struggle displaced this putschist tendency, a conception fusing guerrilla struggle, armed mass struggle, and the organization of the masses in pursuit of economic demands."⁸

Special attention in the general political resolution was given to "The Soviet Bureaucracy." It noted the growth of "interest groups" among the bureaucracy, that so far de-Stalinization had not resulted in "a wave of revolutionary action in the Soviet Union" because "the masses are still affected by political apathy, skepticism, and cynicism concerning socialist theory, a mood from which they are freeing themselves but gradually."⁹

There was reason for optimism, according

to the resolution: "the entire evolution in recent years, the successive divisions, more and more apparent within the bureaucracy, the rapid disappearance of illusions and the continued improvements in the position of the masses, the increase in direct struggles, all foster the revival of the mass movement and a rise in political interest. . . . The creation of a new Soviet section of the Fourth International, the rebirth of a Bolshevik-Leninist organization in the USSR, will play an important role in this rebirth of revolutionary consciousness among the Soviet proletariat."¹⁰

A section on the Sino-Soviet crisis noted in a cursory fashion the evolution of a variety of tendencies among the Communist parties. A longish segment devoted to the situation in the United States noted the particular importance of the growing antiwar movement and of the black drive for "equality and emancipation." Without specifically mentioning the SWP, it endorsed the position of the Socialist Workers Party: "Under these circumstances, black nationalism plays a most progressive role in the dynamics of social struggle and has revolutionary implications."¹¹

This principal resolution of the 1965 congress ended with a section on "Our Tasks." These were:

- (1) . . . to strengthen the struggle against the imperialist aggression in Vietnam and for the Vietnamese Revolution. . . . (2) The unconditional defense of all the workers states, beginning with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, against imperialism. . . . (3) Defense of the revolutionary conquests of Algeria against both imperialist pressure and domestic reaction. (4) Defense of revolutionary movements under way such as those in the Congo, Santo Domingo, Venezuela, etc., against imperialist intervention. (5) Support to the movement for unilateral nuclear disarmament in the imperialist countries. . . . (6) Support to

the efforts to achieve a positive outcome to the crisis shaking the international Communist movement. . . . [7] The Fourth International attaches particular importance to the working and student youth, who stand in the vanguard today in a number of countries. . . .¹²

The 1965 congress resolution on "The Progress and Problems of the African Revolution," carried at least some discussion of the situation in virtually all of the African countries. It divided them into "Colonial Africa," "Neo-Colonial Africa," and "Africa in Revolutionary Transformation" [Mali, Guinea, Ghana, Egypt, and Algeria]. There was a particularly long discussion of the evolution of the Algerian Revolution.¹³

The resolution on "The Evolution of Capitalism in Western Europe," passed by the 1965 congress, is of most interest for its discussion of strategy in its section on "Our Tasks":

the central task of revolutionary Marxists during the entire coming period, insofar as it is objectively determined by the succession of phases of capitalist prosperity and more or less limited recessions, continues to be the one already indicated: to prepare, to justify, to coordinate, to widen and to generalize the struggles of the proletariat in defense of immediate material interests . . . and against the integration of the workers movement into the bourgeois state apparatus. . . . Success in these tasks involves maintaining the orientation of integrating our militants in the mass movement while at the same time maintaining an independent sector.

[Consequently,] Entrist work will continue to be applied in the cps in France and Italy, in the Labor Party in Great Britain, in the sp in Austria, in the sfp in Denmark . . . [in West Germany and Belgium] A modification in tactics . . . is called for. . . .¹⁴

The resolution of the 1965 USEC Congress on the Sino-Soviet dispute is summed up by

the editorial introduction in the *International Socialist Review* to the documents of the Congress: "The aim of the document is not to find 'reasons' for supporting one side or the other, but to ascertain the truth of the situation, the basic cause of the dispute and its major ramifications. In the process it emerges very clearly that the position of the Fourth International is independent. Nevertheless, as between Peking and Moscow, the Trotskyist movement leans to the side of the Chinese."¹⁵

Michel Pablo, for the first time since the European Conference of 1944, did not participate in the 1965 congress. By the time it was held he was already outside of the ranks of the faction of International Trotskyism led by the United Secretariat.

The Factional Conflict of the 1970s

The Beginning of the 1969-79 Struggle

During the preliminaries leading up to the 1969 congress of the United Secretariat there began a controversy within the organization which was to last about a decade, and at one point threatened to bring about a major splintering of USEC. There are several elements of this controversy which are of particular interest.

One element was the fact that the lineup in the 1969-79 struggle was roughly the same as that of the 1950s between the International Secretariat and the International Committee. On the one side were "the Europeans," led particularly by Pierre Frank, Ernest Mandel, and Livio Maitan, and on the other were the Socialist Workers Party of the United States and its allies, particularly in Canada, Australia, and Latin America. It is not clear whether this alignment was more or less accidental or whether it in fact had its roots in long-standing political and personal differences between the two groups.

Another factor of interest was the appar-

ent reversal of roles which took place during the controversy which centered basically on the role of guerrilla warfare in bringing about the Revolution. It had been the SWP which had first rushed to the enthusiastic support of Castro and had been the first to proclaim Cuba a "workers state." The Europeans more or less followed the SWP's lead in this. But in the 1969-79 controversy it was the European leaders who enthusiastically picked up the idea, which Castro had pushed between 1966 and 1968, that guerrilla war was the only acceptable road to the Revolution (a notion he had abandoned by the time this fight in USEC began). On the other hand, it was the SWP leaders who resisted the generalization of the guerrilla warfare idea.

The controversy in the United Secretariat began in November 1968 when a majority of its leadership voted to submit to the forthcoming world congress a "Draft Resolution on Latin America." Joseph Hansen took up the cudgels for the SWP in opposition to this document, charging: "Instead of drawing a balance sheet . . . the draft resolution simply proposes a continental tactic or strategy of technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period."¹⁶

Controversy at the USEC Ninth Congress

The first major clash between the two tendencies occurred at the Ninth Congress (Third Congress Since Reunification) in April 1969. This meeting was attended by about one hundred "delegates and observers" from thirty some countries.¹⁷

As usual, the Ninth Congress adopted a number of basic documents. These included the general political resolution, and special ones dealing with the Cultural Revolution in China, "worldwide youth radicalization," and the situation in Latin America. It was over this last document that the principal clash took place between the two tendencies represented at the congress.

The general political resolution, entitled "Resolution on New Rise of the World Revolution," argued that there was a "new revolutionary upsurge" then under way. It reiterated the analysis of four years earlier that the long economic boom in the capitalist world was drawing to a close, and that after a long period of quiescence, the revolutionary movement was on the march once again in the "imperialist" countries. This was indicated not only by the student-worker uprising in France in May 1968, but by the general upsurge of student radicalization in the capitalist countries, the widespread movement against the Vietnam War, and by the increasing militancy of the black struggle in the United States.

The basic argument of this resolution is best summed up in the following passages:

The new revolutionary upsurge in Western Europe does not mean that the colonial revolution has lost its importance. . . . This new revolutionary rise means that essentially proletarian forces and vanguard political currents carrying on the traditions of revolutionary Marxism and workers democracy will be in the thick of the fight, that their methods of intervening, of action, and organization will draw much closer to the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions. . . . This will have a profound influence on the course and the forms both of the colonial revolution and the political revolution in the bureaucratically deformed or degenerated workers states. The same course will arouse the American proletariat, whose entry on the scene will be the decisive factor in preventing nuclear war from being unleashed by imperialism. . . . It will greatly favor the construction of the Fourth International. . . .¹⁸

There was extensive debate over the resolution on the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The document finally passed by a margin of three to one was a more or less general analysis of the "contradictions" within the

Chinese Communist regime, resulting in the Great Cultural Revolution, which was declared to be essentially a conflict within the ruling bureaucracy.¹⁹ Two minority resolutions urged endorsement of the Maoists and of the anti-Maoists led by Liu Shao-chi respectively.²⁰

There also developed some controversy over the youth resolution. Joseph Hansen later summed up this document saying that it dealt with "how the revolt of the youth had swept many countries, and how we as Trotskyists had become engaged in this movement in many countries. . . . From this, we had drawn the conclusion that the main task facing the world Trotskyist movement in the immediate period following the congress was to turn all its resources, insofar as they are available, to our main task, toward becoming preoccupied with this field of work, that is, among the radicalizing youth. . . . This is the first time that the Trotskyist movement has proposed a series of transitional slogans for this field."²¹

Some of the French delegates argued against the resolution. Hansen reported that "another argument against the document was that it was noninterventionist, that it was sort of propagandistic and did not propose direct intervention in struggles, how to intervene precisely. This was raised by some of the French comrades and was really part of their position that the document was not thoroughly enough worked out. But I also think that their argument that the document was not interventionist was probably related to their feeling that the main axis of work in the immediate period should be preparation for guerrilla war and engagement in it where possible."²²

Controversy Over the Latin American Resolution

The principal controversy, and the clearest alignment of the congress along tendency or factional lines, came over the resolution on Latin America. This document maintained a variety of propositions: that there was in-

tensified penetration by "imperialist corporations" into the Latin American economy; that because of their close association with these corporations, the native industrialist class was unable and unwilling to fight imperialism; that all reformist movements in the region were bankrupt. It held that the "betrayal" of established trade union leaderships and severe persecution of those leaders who were not traitors, and the increased readiness of the United States to use force against the Revolution in Latin America dictated what the line of the Fourth International ought to be in the area.

This resolution proclaimed that "the fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle which may last for long years. This is why the technical preparation cannot be conceived merely as one of the aspects of the revolutionary work, but as the fundamental aspect on a continental scale, and one of the fundamental aspects in countries where the minimum conditions have not yet been met."

The resolution discarded the possibility of alternative ways to power:

Revolutionary Marxists cannot conclude . . . that the 'classical' variant calling for a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement and its structuring and reinforcement through traditional organization forms before it reaches the armed struggle has been revalidated. . . . In reality, the adversary is in nowise ready to allow a mass revolutionary movement to organize more or less legally or normally. . . .

The exceptional variant of an explosive crisis involving the breaking up or paralysis of the state apparatus and a mass mobilization so impetuous that it could prevent or neutralize recourse to repression as a decisive measure, cannot be categorically excluded but a strategy on a continental scale cannot be based on exceptional phenomena. . . .

Even in the case of countries where

large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusively peasant composition of the fighting detachments. . . . In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare.²³

To deal with objections that there didn't seem to be a place in such analysis and prescription for the Leninist type of party, the resolution said:

While it is necessary to reject the schematic and paralyzing conception according to which everything hinges on the preliminary existence of a genuine party with all its traditional structures . . . the two following fundamental facts must, however, never be lost sight of: (a) The existence and functioning of a revolutionary party, far from being an outworn schema of outmoded Marxists, corresponds to the concrete and eluctable needs of the development of the armed struggle. . . . (b) The revolutionists must struggle for the most favorable variant: acting in such a way that when the armed struggle begins, if there is not already a genuine party, completely structured, with a large mass influence [a very unrealistic perspective in almost all of the Latin American countries] in existence, there is at least solid nuclei of a political organization, coordinated on a national scale. . . .²⁴

Joseph Hansen noted subsequently that "the vote on this resolution was two to one in favor of the comrades who favored the guerrilla war strategy. One-third of the delegates were against it." He concluded that the majority for this point of view was provided particularly by the youthful French delegates "heavily influenced by the whole general aura surrounding Che Guevara. . . ." and the largest part of the Latin American

delegates. However, one element among the Argentines, that led by Nahuel Moreno, was opposed.²⁵ The principal argument against the majority position on Latin America was presented by Hansen. One can gather from some of his subsequent writings the nature of the arguments which Hansen made at the 1969 congress.

First of all, he argued that the majority at the congress was confusing strategy and tactics, and in doing so were turning their backs on traditional Trotskyist positions. He wrote that "what is primary in revolutionary strategy, the minority maintained, is building a combat party; resorting to guerrilla warfare should be regarded as a secondary, tactical question."²⁶

Second, Hansen argued that the majority at the congress were mistaken in thinking that in advocating a generalized strategy of guerrilla warfare in Latin America, they were following the Castroite lead. Later, Hansen wrote that "at the world congress the majority counted on the Cubans continuing to do what they had done in the case of the guerrilla front opened by Che Guevara in Bolivia. This was a hazardous calculation, the minority maintained, because the full consequences of the defeat of Che had yet to be measured. In particular the Cubans might be in the process of reassessing their line in Latin America in view of the repeated setbacks that had been experienced. If the Cubans were to undertake a reorientation, the minority pointed out, then the resources available to the small groups still committed to carrying out the old line would become even more limited. To plunge ahead despite this change in the situation would prove to be exceedingly ill-advised."²⁷

In the third place, Hansen and the minority at the congress argued that the adoption of such a position on Latin America was "ultra-leftism," and would make it hard to avoid generalizing the arguments of the majority resolution to cover much of the rest, if not all, of the world. Later Hansen wrote that "Comrade Maitan is vexed at my conclusion that the course prescribed by him

and made official in the Latin American resolution represents a concession to ultra-leftism. I stated further—and I see no reason to change this opinion: 'Consistent application of the course charted by Comrade Maitan would prove disastrous for the Fourth International. The line could hardly be confined to Latin America or even the colonial world generally, for the same ultraleft tendencies to which the adaptation has been made are operative in the imperialist centers. Fostering an ultraleft course in Latin America would surely be paralleled by permissiveness toward ultraleftism, if not worse, in the imperialist centers. In fact, there is evidence that this has already been occurring in the quite different context of conditions in Britain.'"²⁸

Extension of the Factional Struggle

The factional fight which had broken out before and during the 1969 World Congress continued in the years that followed. However, until a December 1972 plenum of the International Executive Committee the two contending groups had no formal tendency organizations. At that meeting a document entitled "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet," which discussed the failure of guerrilla activities in those two countries, was submitted over the signatures of Hansen and Peter Camejo of the SWP, Hugo Blanco of Peru, and Anibal Lorenzo and Nahuel Moreno of the Argentine Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores. This document did not serve to change the minds or positions of the majority in the United Secretariat leadership.

Shortly after the December 1972 IEC meeting, those who had submitted the document on Bolivia and Argentina issued a call for the formal establishment of an international tendency opposed to the position on guerrilla warfare. At a meeting in Santiago, Chile in March 1973, such a group, the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT) was organized. Meanwhile, the groups supporting

the majority at the December 1972 plenum also organized, taking first the name IEC Majority Tendency, and then changing it to International Majority Tendency (IMT).

Subsequently, the lines between the two groups hardened. Leslie Evans has noted that "later in 1973 the LTT came to the conclusion that the IMT was in fact functioning as a secret faction, deciding its positions through prior caucus meetings before bringing them into the leading bodies of the International, carrying on its own internal discussion outside the regular channels of international communication, etc. This posed the danger that the faction body that controlled the majority vote in the leading committees was beginning to regard itself as the 'real' International, where all important discussions and decisions were made, while the elected leadership bodies of the International were becoming simply a forum for the presentation of previously decided questions pushed through by a bloc vote. . . . Such a situation could even lead to a split in the International."

As a consequence, the LTT decided to transform itself from a "tendency" to a "faction," taking the name Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF). According to Evans, the purpose of this change was "to exercise some discipline over its own adherents in order to forestall any ill-considered actions from its own side in the dispute."²⁹

The 1974 World Congress

The factional struggle in the United Secretariat continued during the Tenth World Congress, which met in February 1974. Hansen noted that "a notable feature of the congress was its size. About 250 persons were present, representing organizations in forty-one countries. . . . The growth was accounted for in part by the appearance of new groups in countries where Trotskyist ideas were previously little known. . . ."³⁰

Virtually all of the motions discussed at the congress were bitterly debated between

the two major factions, with a much smaller group known as the Mezhrayonka Tendency, also contributing to the controversy. It is sufficient here to discuss the arguments over two of the motions which were debated, that is, the general political resolution and one dealing with Latin America. In both cases competing positions were put forward by the International Majority Tendency and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction.

The General Political Resolution which was submitted by the IMT. was adopted by the congress with 142 votes, against 124 in opposition, and four abstentions.³¹ It started with a discussion of the end of the long period of prosperity in the capitalist economy, and the overall decline in the relative position of United States "imperialism." It then underscored the continuation of the "revolutionary rise" then supposedly under way in Western Europe and Japan, and the prospects for the same kind of development in North America.

The resolution then noted the alleged growth of the role of proletarian elements in the revolutionary politics of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. This was followed by a discussion of the continuing crisis in the "workers states," their moves toward reintroduction of the market, at the alleged expense of the workers, but also stressed the relative immobilism in the Soviet Union. It professed to see a forthcoming intermingling of the socialist revolution in Western Europe and the antibureaucratic revolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Much emphasis was given in this resolution to the appearance of a "new mass vanguard on a world scale" for the first time since the founding of the Comintern, and on the need for the Trotskyists to acquire leadership of this element. In this connection, it speculated on the danger that right turns in the policies of the Chinese and Cuban leaderships might destroy this new mass vanguard. In listing the tasks of the International in the next period, the resolu-

tion included a call for a "modernization" of the Transitional Program.

The orientation and content of the counter proposal presented by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction was basically different from that of the majority. It was defeated at the congress by a vote of 118 to 147, with four abstentions and one not voting.

The LTF draft started with a discussion of the world oil crisis, noting the havoc that it had caused in Europe, Japan and the colonial and semi-colonial countries. It urged that the Trotskyists take advantage of the crisis to push not only their old "transitional slogan" of a sliding wage scale to keep up with inflation, but add the additional slogan of a "sliding hours" system to take care of the growing unemployment situation.

A major part of the LTF draft stressed that "the World Revolution Resumes Its Main Course," after a "long detour" through guerrilla war and peasant revolt based on the Chinese and Cuban models. It stressed "the city reasserting its hegemony over the countryside." Although it didn't "reject guerrilla warfare under all circumstances," the document said that the Fourth International "views the utilization of guerrilla warfare as a tactical question to be weighed in the light of concrete situations that may arise in the course of struggle. What the Fourth International does oppose under all circumstances is the view that a small group can bypass the arduous task of constructing a Leninist-type party by substituting for the masses in armed struggle."³²

The draft then went on to stress the need of the proletariat for "allies" in carrying out the revolution. These included the movements for national liberation (even in Europe and the United States), rebellious youth, and the women's movement.

The draft included a considerable critique of the Cuban situation. It criticized the "retreat" by the Castro forces vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. It also commented that "it must be acknowledged that the Cuban revolution has not realized its initial potentialities in

helping to resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership internationally. In serious respects the Cuban leaders have fallen back, while dangerous bureaucratic tendencies continue to gather headway."³³

The LFT document contained a long section on the Vietnam War. It stressed the effect of the war on undermining United States society.

The section of the LFT draft which most emphasized the differences with the International Majority Tendency was that entitled "Maturing of Subjective Conditions for Revolution." It stressed that "the subjective conditions required for transcending the prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization have not changed *qualitatively* since 1938. No party adhering to the Fourth International has as yet won a majority of the working class or of its militant vanguard. *The Fourth International still stands at the stage in which the primary task is the accumulation of cadres.*"

From this fact, the draft concluded that "the framework of tasks is set by the frank and clear-sighted recognition that the central problems facing the Fourth International are those associated with the growth of small revolutionary propaganda organizations and not those faced by seasoned revolutionary parties of the masses about to take power."

The draft condemned shortcuts to the Revolution. It particularly denounced the emphasis on guerrilla war: "The last world congress, it must now be acknowledged, took an incorrect position in relation to guerrilla warfare by adopting an orientation which called on the sections of the Fourth International in Latin America to prepare for and to engage in it as a strategic line."³⁴

There was also strong controversy over the specific question of Latin America, which was also embodied in two competing documents. The IMT resolution on the subject was adopted by a vote of 142 to 125, with one abstention and two not voting.³⁵

The IMT resolution began with the asser-

tion of the basic correctness of the Ninth Congress position on guerrilla warfare in Latin America. It then listed among the elements of the "primary duty of revolutionary Marxists," that they should "continually warn the masses against any illusion that they can escape armed confrontation by extending their democratic or economic struggles. It is precisely the stepping up of the mobilization that makes armed confrontation inevitable in the short run, in the present social, economic and political conditions in Latin America." It called on the Latin American sections "to untiringly popularize the necessity for the general arming of the workers and poor peasants in self-defense bodies that can develop into workers, peasants and people's militias."

It stressed specific moves to be taken to launch the "armed struggle." One was "not to rest content with general and abstract propaganda in this area, but to undertake initial pilot projects, to enter into preliminary actions that are carefully calculated for the effect they can have in raising the level of consciousness of the masses, increasing their combativity, and their will and capacity for arming themselves." Another task was that of "forming armed detachments of the party. . . ."³⁶

The Leninist Trotskyist Faction alternative draft on Latin America was defeated by a vote of 118 to 143, with six abstentions and three not voting. It stressed that, although the Trotskyists had traditionally emphasized the need for the use of violence in the Revolution, they had always stressed that it would be mass violence: "It is the mobilization and organization of tens of millions of people. The concept is one of immense boldness—a perspective of organizing the masses by the millions. . . . By what strategy is this aim to be achieved? It is through the construction of a mass revolutionary party, an instrument interlocked with the masses and thereby in position to provide them with leadership at each stage of the struggle."³⁷

However, the LTF draft claimed that the IMT document "revises the Trotskyist position. It reaffirms the guerrilla orientation adopted at the 1969 congress. At the same time it seeks to make that orientation more palatable. . . . What is referred to in the resolution . . . is not armed struggle as initiated and carried out by the majority of the population but violent actions initiated and carried out by small groups. Such actions are supposed to serve as examples to the masses." The IMT proposal put "emphasis on the action of miniscule groups. In reality that is all the resolution deals with—the action of miniscule groups isolated from the masses."

The LTF draft also argued that the blanket endorsement of guerrilla war for Latin America by the majority, if valid for that region, ought logically to be expanded throughout the world. It argued that "if it is true that the bourgeoisie will grant concessions in face of small mobilizations, as the resolution states elsewhere, but will seek to smash big mobilizations, doesn't that hold for Western Europe and for the United States?"³⁸

Finally, the LTF document claimed that the acceptance of the guerrilla line by the Fourth International had been due largely to the influx of young people into the Fourth International who were inspired by the Chinese, Vietnam, and Cuban revolutions, but not by the Russian one. Furthermore, it said, a number of old-timers who should have known better had acquiesced to the youngsters.

Denouement of the Factional Conflict of 1970s

Hansen noted after the Tenth Congress that there had been extensive negotiations between the IMT and LTF before the meeting to assure its orderly procedure, and that there had also been accord between the two groups concerning the policy to be followed after the congress. It had been agreed to sus-

pend further discussion on the issues voted on at the congress for one year, to maintain discussion in a monthly international discussion bulletin on the Chinese Cultural Revolution, youth radicalization, the women's movement, the Middle East, Vietnam, and Eastern Europe. It was also agreed to hold the next congress within two years.

Another part of the agreement between the two factions introduced an innovation in the Fourth International. It gave recognition to the fact that rival "sections" representing the two factions had come into existence. Although it instructed the IEC to use all its influence to bring about a merger of these groups, it also provided that "at the congress, Fourth Internationalist groups already existing separately were recognized regardless of their size as sympathizing groups; but this exceptional measure was not to be regarded as a precedent."³⁹

The Eleventh Congress did not in fact take place until November 1979. During the intervening period a number of events transpired which ultimately brought the conflict between the IMT and LTF to an end, but which also resulted in a substantial split in the United Secretariat.

One relatively minor development following the 1974 World Congress was the breaking away from USEC of the Third Tendency, which had stood apart from both the IMT and LTF at the congress, and had been led by an Italian Roberto Massari. Soon after the Tenth Congress Massari split the Italian affiliate to form the Lega Comunista. He then took the lead in establishing the Necessary International Initiative (NII), a kind of "opposition" to USEC conceived of as having a role similar to that of the Left Opposition to the Comintern in the early 1930s. A Third Tendency faction in Great Britain, and the Spartacusbund, which had earlier broken away from the German USEC affiliate, were among the groups participating in the NII.⁴⁰ We have no information concerning how long the NII continued in existence.

One of the most significant events of the

period after the Tenth Congress was a split in the Leninist Trotskyist Faction which took place in February 1976. At that time several of the Latin American sections which had been associated with the LTF broke away from it in disagreement with the LTF's position on the developments in Portugal following the 1974 revolution there. They formed the Bolshevik Tendency. The principal figure of this Tendency was Hugo Bressano, more generally known by his party name, Nahuel Moreno, the main leader of the Argentine Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores.⁴¹ Before the Eleventh Congress, the Bolshevik Tendency was to abandon the United Secretariat and establish its own separate branch of International Trotskyism.

Meanwhile, in August 1975 the LTF Steering Committee issued a call for the dissolution of both factions, saying that "if there are guarantees for a full, free and democratic discussion, there is no need for a factional structure. . . . While ideological tendencies are still called for because of the political differences, there would be no objective need to maintain the factions in order to have the necessary discussion. . . ." This suggestion was turned down at the time by the International Majority Tendency.⁴²

A number of new issues of dispute between the two factions subsequently arose. These included the attitude to be taken toward the Portuguese Revolution, where the international leadership of the IMT favored an alliance with the left wing of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), and the LTF urged the Portuguese Trotskyists to have nothing to do with the MFA and to issue a call for a Socialist-Communist government instead of one dominated by the military.

Another source of disagreement was the relations between the United Secretariat and the Lambertist international tendency, the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORFI). CORFI approached the USEC for discussions with a view to the possibility of

reunification of the two groups. The LTF favored such discussions, the IMT opposed them.

Finally, the old "organizational issue" also was raised. The LTF complained that USEC was attempting to interfere in the internal affairs of various sections to a degree not provided for in the Statutes of the international organization, and that in some of the European sections it was beginning to purge leaders of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction.⁴³

However, at a point at which, if previous experiences of the Fourth International were to give any indication, a complete split between the two factions seemed a possibility if not a likelihood, the situation suddenly changed. In part, at least, this was due to increasing differences which were tending to develop within both the IMT and the LTF. In part, too, it was undoubtedly due to a reassessment by the European leaders of the issue which had been the cause of the original differences in USEC, the endorsement of guerrilla warfare as the basic strategy of the organization, at least in Latin America.

In December 1976, the Steering Committee of the IMT published a document of "self criticism," the key paragraph of which was the following: "At the Ninth World Congress we paid the price for this lack of systematic analysis of the Cuban revolution. On the basis of rapid and hasty generalizations, we *did not clearly oppose the incorrect lessons* drawn from the Cuban revolution by the great majority of the Latin American vanguard. Even though what had really happened in Cuba provided us the necessary means, we did not adequately combat the idea—which cost so many deaths and defeats in Latin America—that a few dozen or a few hundred revolutionaries (no matter how courageous and capable) isolated from the rest of the society could set in motion a historic process leading to a socialist revolution."⁴⁴

A few months later, in August 1977, the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trots-

kyist Faction proclaimed the unilateral dissolution of its group. Three months after that, the IMT also dissolved. Subsequently, leaders of the two groups worked together to draft the major documents for the Eleventh Congress of the USEC.⁴⁵

The definitive end of this long controversy came at the Eleventh Congress, with the adoption of a new resolution on Latin America. It was passed with a vote of ninety-four in favor, eleven against, 3.5 abstentions, and 4.5 not voting.⁴⁶ The key portion of that resolution read, "The Fourth International promoted an incorrect political orientation in Latin America for several years. . . . As a result of this erroneous line, many of the cadres and parties of the Fourth International were politically disarmed in face of the widespread, but false, idea that a small group of courageous and capable revolutionaries could set in motion a process leading to a socialist revolution. The process of rooting our parties in the working class and oppressed masses was hindered. The line that was followed . . . led to adventurist actions and losses from our own ranks. . . ."⁴⁷

The Morenoist Split in the United Secretariat

Before the ending of the conflict within the United Secretariat between the International Majority Tendency and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, a new split had developed. As a consequence of that new struggle a division of some consequence took place in the USEC shortly before the Eleventh Congress.

Two elements were involved in this new division in the ranks of International Trotskyism. One of these was the Bolshevik Tendency, the other was a new Leninist Trotskyist Tendency made up principally of dissidents from the United Secretariat's affiliate in France.⁴⁸ The Bolshevik Tendency was the more important element in the 1979 split.

The principal figure in the Bolshevik Ten-

dency was Nahuel Moreno. A veteran of the Trotskyist movement, he had led a split in the USEC affiliate in Argentina, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT), when that group opted for guerrilla warfare in 1968. His faction had merged with a splinter from the Argentine Socialist Party to form the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, which during the 1970s was one of the world's numerically strongest Trotskyist parties.

Because of his alignment against the USEC majority's general endorsement of the guerrilla war strategy for Latin America, Moreno's group was given only "sympathizer" status in the USEC in its 1969 congress. Even though the PRT had withdrawn from the Trotskyist movement, the 1974 congress again refused to recognize the PST as its full-fledged Argentine section. However, Moreno and the PST had several other Latin American sections of the USEC aligned with them.

The document issued by leaders of the USEC's affiliates in Argentina, Venezuela, Peru, Mexico, and Uruguay in February 1976, announcing the launching of the Bolshevik Tendency attacked both the IMT and the LTF. Its arguments against the IMT started with a general indictment of its policy since the Ninth World Congress in 1969. It categorized as "ultra-leftist" both the endorsement of guerrilla warfare as certain in Latin America, and the orientation of the United Secretariat after the 1974 congress toward a new "broad vanguard" which supposedly had appeared since the 1960s.

More specifically, the Bolshevik Tendency statement argued that the error of the IMT orientation had been most clearly demonstrated in the Portuguese Revolution. There the IMT supporters sought to recruit principally among various far-left groups which appeared instead of among the followers of the mass Socialist and Communist parties. They also followed the other far-left groups in "tailing" the Communists, particularly in the unsuccessful coup of Novem-

ber 1975 in which the Communists cooperated with some officers of the Armed Forces Movement.

The Bolshevik Tendency accused the LTF, and particularly the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, of being "reformists." On the specific issue of the Portuguese Revolution it attacked the "reformists" for allegedly aligning too closely with the Socialist Party.⁴⁹

Another accusation against the SWP proved to be curious in the light of what occurred a few years later. It was that "they show the most eager interest in Lambertism with which any union will be difficult in view of the degree of ossification its sectarianism has reached. . . ."⁵⁰

Subsequent to establishment of the Bolshevik Tendency, which later took the name Bolshevik Faction, it continued to quarrel with both of the other elements of the United Secretariat. In a "Declaration and Platform of the Bolshevik Faction" published in July 1979, for instance, it said concerning the IMT that "before, it joined forces with a leftism of a radicalized vanguard in which students were preponderant. Now they submit to the pressure of Euro Communism and a trade union and middle class vanguard which serve as transmission belts for a liberal ideology and public opinion of the imperialist countries. . . . This capitulation is what has made possible the convergence between the ex-IMT and the leaders of the SWP, what is to say, the ex-LTF."⁵¹

The United Secretariat After the Morenoist Split

For a short while after the exit of Nahuel Moreno and his faction unity seemed more or less to reign within USEC, as was demonstrated at the Eleventh World Congress, in November 1979. In the early 1980s still another factional struggle began within the organization, however. From an ideological and programmatic point of view this was the most serious controversy in the movement's history, involving as it did chal-

lenges to the fundamental tenets of International Trotskyism.

The Eleventh World Congress (fifth since reunification) met in Belgium between November 17-25, 1979. It was reported that delegates were present "representing sections and sympathizing organizations in forty-eight countries in Europe, Asia, America, Oceania, the Caribbean and North and South America. There were about 200 people in attendance."⁵²

Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the SWP, said that "the large majority vote for the European resolution also indicated a series of differences over the tasks of our movement in Europe, which had emerged during the IMT-LTF factional struggle, had been resolved. The resolution of the long internal struggle in the International and the dissolution of the two major factions represented a major victory. . . ."⁵³

Although there was clearly debate and controversy during this World Congress, there did not exist the kind of hard and fast factional divisions which had marked the Ninth and Tenth congresses. Most of the resolutions adopted by the meeting were passed with very substantial majorities.

For example, the vote on the major political resolution, "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International," introduced by Ernest Mandel, was ninety-two in favor, seven against, 11.5 abstaining and 2.5 not voting. The major innovation in this document was "the turn to industry" which was proclaimed the most important "immediate task" of USEC; on this there was a separate vote of ninety-five for, nine against, 6.5 abstentions and 2.5 not voting.⁵⁴ Perhaps even more significantly, the "Resolution on Latin America," which repudiated USEC's ten-year-long strategy position in that area, was passed ninety-four to eleven, with 3.5 abstentions and 4.5 not voting.⁵⁵

A number of other resolutions were passed by the Eleventh World Congress. These included documents on women's lib-

eration, the situation in Europe, problems of winning youth to the Revolution, as well as resolutions on Nicaragua and Indochina. Finally, there were two resolutions discussing the Trotskyists' position on Socialism and Democracy which we have cited earlier in this volume.⁵⁶

During 1981 there began another major controversy between the principal European figures in the United Secretariat and leaders of the United States Socialist Workers Party. These exchanges involved extensive repudiation by SWP leaders of some of the basic tenets of Trotskyism, and defense of Trotskyist theories by some of the European leaders. The most important documents were by Doug Jenness, editor of *The Militant*, and by Ernest Mandel, and appeared in the "International Socialist Review" supplement of *The Militant*, and in *Quatrième Internationale*, the publication of the United Secretariat.

This controversy began with an article by Doug Jenness entitled "Our Political Continuity With Bolshevism." In that piece Jenness argued that Lenin had always advocated combining the bourgeois and proletarian revolutions in Russia. He maintained that in prerevolutionary Russia there were only two trends in the Socialist revolutionary movement: that of the Mensheviks, who favored collaboration with the democratic bourgeois reformists, and the Bolsheviks led by Lenin, who favored rapid conversion of the bourgeois democratic revolution into the proletarian one. In essence, without saying so explicitly, he was arguing that the "permanent revolution" concept was one Lenin had always supported.⁵⁷

Ernest Mandel rebutted Jenness's article, arguing that there were in fact three strands in the prerevolutionary Russian Socialist movement: the Menshevik position, that of Lenin, and that of Trotsky. Both Lenin and Trotsky, he said, were opposed to alliance with bourgeois parties in the prerevolutionary period. However, Lenin favored Socialist participation in the provisional revolution-

ary government for the purpose of carrying out the bourgeois revolution (establishment of a republic and political democracy, and enactment of agrarian reform), after which the workers party would enter into a long period of opposition until capitalism matured and socialist revolutionary forces developed the capacity to carry out the socialist revolution.⁵⁸

Doug Jenness replied, arguing that Lenin never foresaw a long period of capitalist democratic revolution after overthrow of the czarist regime. He also maintained that Lenin had been right in advocating a workers and peasants government which at the beginning would include all the peasants, and subsequently only the poorer peasants as social conflicts developed in the countryside. He claimed that that is what had happened in 1917-18.

Jenness insisted that Trotsky had been wrong in arguing that it wasn't possible to work with the peasants, and that he had largely ignored their revolutionary potential. He added that Trotsky had also been wrong in his position towards World War I, when he had held the slogan "neither victory nor defeat" instead of the revolutionary defeatism of Lenin, and in not supporting Lenin's concept of a vanguard party. In general, Jenness argued, Lenin had been right and Trotsky wrong.⁵⁹

In Mandel's rebuttal to Jenness's second article he claimed that Jenness had quoted Lenin out of context. He also reiterated his earlier argument that Lenin had changed his position, accepting Trotsky's ideas on the permanent revolution with the adoption of the Bolshevik Party's April Theses in 1917. He also rebutted Jenness's claim that the regime established on November 7, 1917 had really been the kind of "workers and peasants government" which Lenin had advocated before the April Theses, saying that it was in fact the "dictatorship of the proletariat with the support of the peasantry" which Trotsky had always argued for.

In this article Mandel indicated the cur-

rent relevance of the somewhat esoteric argument over Russian revolutionary history. He raised some fundamental questions about the future of the Trotskyist movement. He asked whether what he conceived of as the abandonment of the permanent revolution thesis of Trotsky by the *swp* presaged the *swp*'s abandonment also of Trotsky's position in favor of a "political revolution" in the Communist Party-controlled states. In his peroration, Mandel said that "our polemic has only one purpose: to save the Socialist Workers party for revolutionary Marxism, for the American revolution, for the world revolution. But it will only be saved if it stops in time the march of certain of its leaders towards a rupture with Trotskyism."⁶⁰

There were other polemics between the Europeans and the *swp*. These centered on greetings for an *swp* fraternal delegate to a congress of the French affiliate of *USEC*, criticism by P'eng Shu-tze of the position of the *swp* on Cuba,⁶¹ and disagreements over the position to be assumed with regard to the Solidarity movement in Poland and its suppression by the Polish government, among other things.⁶²

A new turn in the controversy was the speech by Jack Barnes, secretary of the *swp* before the congress of the Young Socialist Alliance in December 1982, where he denounced most of those claiming to be Trotskyists as in fact being "sectarians." This speech is discussed in some detail in another chapter. This controversy was probably one of the factors explaining the length of time between the Eleventh World Congress of *USEC* in 1979 and the twelfth one in 1985. Certainly the issues raised in Barnes's speech impinged directly and indirectly on the Twelfth World Congress.

The basic resolutions of the Twelfth World Congress dealt with "The World Situation," "The Lessons and the Perspectives of the Revolution in Central America," "Political Revolution and Counter-revolution in Poland," "The Relevance of the Theory

of the Permanent Revolution and the Notion of a Workers and Farmers Government," "Socialist Democracy and Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (a modification of the revolution presented to but not fully adopted by the 1979 congress, to which we referred at length earlier in this volume), and "The Present Stage of Building the Fourth International." In the discussion of these documents there were two "declared tendencies," one centering on the majority of the outgoing leadership of *USEC*, the other led by the Socialist Workers Party of the U.S. The Australian *swp*, which withdrew from the ranks of International Trotskyism a few months later, generally stood alone at the congress, presenting positions strongly critical of both the majority and of the *swp*-U.S. and its allies.

Five new sections were accepted by the congress—those of Brazil, Uruguay, Ecuador, Senegal, and Iceland. It was reported that the United Secretariat "is today present in some sixty countries." There were about two hundred "delegates, fraternal delegates, observers, and invited guests."

One of the most serious organizational issues was that concerning the United States, where a large-scale purge of sympathizers with the *USEC* majority and supporters of traditional Trotskyist positions had recently taken place. Three organizations had been established by those expelled or who had resigned as a consequence of the expulsions. Delegates from three groups—the Socialist Workers Party, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (*FIT*), and Socialist Action (*SA*)—were seated at the congress, which resolved that the *swp* should permit return of the *FIT* and *SA* members to its ranks; pending that outcome, the two groups, along with the *swp*, should be recognized by the *USEC* as affiliated to it. It also was noted that the North Star Network, headed by ex-*swp* leader Peter Camejo, was no longer associated with the United Secretariat.

Similar steps were taken by the congress

with regard to Canada, where a split similar to that in the U.S. swp had taken place. "Formal relations were established" by the congress with Gauche Socialiste in Quebec and the Alliance for Socialist Action in Anglophone Canada.

In the debates on programmatic issues during the congress, the FIT and SA of the United States and the two new Canadian groups were aligned with the majority, which basically defended the traditional positions of International Trotskyism. The Socialist Workers Party and its Canadian counterpart, on the other hand, were aligned with the minority which challenged those traditional positions.⁶³

Conclusion

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International, established at the so-called Reunification Congress of 1963, continued to be for the next two decades the largest group claiming the heritage of the original Fourth International. It suffered two major splits, and by the early 1980s was threatened by a third which might prove to be the most damaging of all, resulting from a challenge to the basic principles of International Trotskyism.

U.S. Trotskyism: From the Cannonite Faction to the Workers Party

The Trotskyist movement in the United States may be said to have had its origins in the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in the late summer of 1928. It was there that James P. Cannon first encountered the documents which Trotsky had prepared to justify himself and attack his CPSU opponents, and Cannon was "converted" on the spot to Trotskyism. That conversion was the acorn from which the U.S. Trotskyist oak grew.

Cannon and Early U.S. Trotskyism

The Cannonite Faction in the Communist Party

James Cannon was a veteran of the factional wars which had characterized the Communist Party, USA, during its first decade. He had been a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) before World War I, and had joined the Socialist Party during the war because of its antiwar position. He soon became active in the left wing of the Socialist Party which ultimately gave birth to the Communist Party—or several communist parties, which were finally united on instructions received from the fledgling Communist International.

Many years later Max Shachtman wrote of Cannon's role in the Communist Party that "he was known as an excellent orator, a very smooth writer, an exceedingly intelligent and shrewd politician."¹ He added that "Cannon was a native revolutionist, so to speak—a very able man. He had a very strong and effective feeling for the American

working class and the American labor movement, for American problems. . . ."²

Cannon's first major factional fight was conducted together with Jay Lovestone and Charles Ruthenberg as a leader of the so-called "liquidators." Their faction favored ending the underground status of the Communist Party at first decreed by the Third International, and bringing the party out into the open as a legal organization. At first securing the establishment of a legal "front" organization, the Workers Party, late in 1921, they finally took their case to Moscow to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern in 1922, and there with, according to Cannon, the support of Lenin and Trotsky (whom Cannon met for the first time), they got the endorsement of the International for merging the underground organization with the Workers Party.³

Within a year, however, realignment within the party had brought new factions, and this time Cannon was the joint leader with William Z. Foster, the trade unionist who had recently joined the Communists' ranks, of a faction opposed to that led by Ruthenberg and Lovestone. According to Cannon, the Foster-Cannon group, which had its main strength outside New York City, was the "trade union, proletarian faction" and was backed by "the great bulk—practically all—of the trade unionists, experienced American workers, militants and the more Americanized foreigners." Their opponents, on the other hand, according to Cannon, "had most of the intellectuals and the less-assimilated foreign-born workers. The typical leaders of their faction, including the typical second-line leaders, were City College boys, young intellectuals without experience in the class struggle."⁴

Until the 1925 convention of the Communist Party the Foster-Cannon faction controlled the party. However, at that convention there arrived a cable from the Comintern ordering that they elect a Politburo on which there were even numbers of the two factions, with a CI representative

having the casting vote. The Comintern representative in question was Gusev, or Green, a Russian who was frankly aligned with the Ruthenberg-Lovestone group.

It was this order which gave rise to a split in the Foster-Cannon faction. Foster wanted to resist the Comintern's instructions, but Cannon was opposed to this, arguing that it was futile to try to fight the Communist International. Thereafter, three factions existed in the party: the Ruthenberg-Lovestone group, the Fosterites, and the Cannonites.⁵

Shachtman later indicated the basic reason why Cannon, together with almost all the leaders of the U.S. Communist Party, were totally unwilling to challenge the Comintern's decision: "the authority—not just the formal authority, not just the authority of the first—of the leaders of the International in those days is unimaginable to any one of our time. . . . A comrade like myself, and Communists much more prominent in the United States than I was, could not but feel his own terrible inadequacy as compared with these enormous figures, these great leaders of the Russian Revolution. This may sound—probably does—a little lyrical and dithyrambic, but it is true. That's how we felt. That's how we felt."⁶

Each of the factions had its power base. The Ruthenberg-Lovestoneites had control of the party machinery as such; the Fosterites "occupied the whole territory of trade union work." The Cannonites' stronghold was in the International Labor Defense, which they ran "virtually as we pleased," according to Cannon.⁷ Until the death of Ruthenberg all four factional leaders were always members of the Political Committee of the party.⁸

Albert Glotzer has noted that by 1928 there was a growing feeling of futility within the Cannon faction about the possibility of gaining control of the party because of consistent support of the Lovestoneites by the Comintern.⁹ Cannon also commented that "each time we went to Moscow full of con-

fidence that this time we were going to get some help, some support, because we were on the right line, because our proposals were correct. And each time we were disappointed, cruelly disappointed. The Comintern invariably supported the petty-bourgeois faction against us." He added that the Comintern showed that "they wanted to break up this bloc" of the Foster and Cannon groups against the Lovestoneites, "and they were especially anxious, for some reason or other, to break up our group—the Cannon group."¹⁰

Max Shachtman summed up the position of the Cannon faction by 1928 thus: "From its birth, the Cannon faction never had a distinguishing program of its own, never played an independent role, never had a meaningful solution for the factionalism that incessantly corroded the party but whose roots it did not even begin to understand. If, as a small minority, it nevertheless had the support of a number of excellent militants, it won them not because of any of its virtues in principle or program—in general it had none that anyone, its spokesmen included, could ever define—but because of the out-and-out vices that marked the leadership and program of the Foster and Lovestone factions. . . ."¹¹

Cannon at the Sixth Congress

It was under these circumstances that Cannon went to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in August 1928, as part of the U.S. delegation, representing his faction. He finally went in spite of the fact that he at first resisted the idea, feeling it would be futile.¹²

Cannon knew little about the details of the struggle which had been taking place in the Soviet party, and in this he was typical of the leadership of the CPUSA. In his history of U.S. Trotskyism Cannon noted the routine condemnations of Trotsky and his colleagues by the American party, after their final defeat in the USSR. However, he noted that "looking back on it now, it is an inter-

esting circumstance, which rather foreshadows what was to follow, that I never took part in any of these campaigns. I voted for the stereotyped resolutions, I regret to say, but I never made a single speech or wrote a single article against Trotskyism. That was not because I was a Trotskyist. . . . I refused to take part in the campaigns only because I didn't understand the issues."¹³ He did not speak at the Central Committee Plenum in February 1928 which formally condemned Trotsky and his followers.¹⁴

At the Sixth Congress Cannon was assigned to the program commission. He noted later that "that turned out to be a bad mistake—putting me on the program commission." It was members of that commission who, by some oversight of the managers of the congress, received copies of Trotsky's critique "The Draft Program of the Communist International: A Criticism of Fundamentals."

Cannon, together with Maurice Spector, a member of the Canadian delegation, read the document. Cannon recounted that "we let the caucus meetings and the Congress sessions go to the devil while we read and studied this document. Then I know what I had to do, and so did he. Our doubts had been resolved. It was as clear as daylight that Marxist truth was on the side of Trotsky. We made a compact there and then—Spector and I—that we would come back home and begin a struggle under the banner of Trotskyism."¹⁵

Expulsion of the Trotskyists

Cannon succeeded in smuggling a copy of the Trotsky document out of Moscow and getting it home to New York. However, it was not easy to build up a pro-Trotsky faction in the U.S. Communist Party. Trotsky had been condemned as a heretic by the Comintern and by all of its parties, including that of the United States; to support Trotsky was to join him in heresy, and to assure one's expulsion from the party. Thus

the process of gaining recruits had to be confined to surreptitiously showing the copy of the Trotsky document to trusted comrades and seeking to win their allegiance to it, and to what would now be a frankly pro-Trotsky faction.

Cannon recounted that his first convert, once he had returned home, was his lifelong companion, Rose Karsner. The second and third were Max Shachtman and Martin Abern, long-time close associates of Cannon in his caucus.¹⁶ It was Cannon and these three who then set about trying to recruit further converts to their "subversion."

Shachtman had been a leader of the Communists' youth group, the Young Workers League (YWL). He had attended the Fifth Plenum of the Communist International in 1925 and the Seventh Plenum in 1927 as the YWL member of the U.S. Communist Party delegation to those meetings.¹⁷ At the Seventh Plenum Gregory Zinoviev was removed as head of the Comintern, as a result of the defeat of the United Opposition in the struggle within the Soviet Communist Party. There Shachtman met Vujko Vuyovitch, the Yugoslav youth who was a secretary of the Young Communist International, a Zinovievist who tried unsuccessfully to win Shachtman over to support of the United Opposition.¹⁸ At the time of his expulsion, Shachtman was editor of *Labor Defender*, the periodical of the International Labor Defense.¹⁹ He also was largely responsible for editing the *Daily Worker*, the party's daily newspaper then published in Chicago.²⁰

Of Martin Abern, Shachtman wrote that "Abern as a very young man was one of the most active leading people in the Socialist Party in Minnesota. He came from Minneapolis, from a poor family, made his living as a newsboy for years, was picked up during the war for deportation . . . he was saved at the last minute by a court order procured by his attorney. . . ." Abern had been one of the principal Communist youth leaders and in 1928 was leader of the party's District 8

[Chicago] and a member of the Central Committee.²¹

The activities of Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern could not long remain secret within the party. The Fosterites, who had been aligned with the Cannonites against the Lovestone majority, were the first to take fright. After unsuccessfully confronting Cannon and the others with the rumors of their Trotskyism the Fosterites finally broke up their joint caucus with Cannon and his followers.²²

Finally, the Fosterites—fearful of themselves being tarred with the "Trotskyite" brush—brought formal charges against Cannon and his associates, and they were put on trial before the Political Committee and Central Control Commission of the CPUSA. Before the trial was over, one hundred people attended.

At first, Cannon and the others "stonewalled," not denying their Trotskyism but challenging in cross-examination the source of the charges made by the Foster people. "Finally," as Cannon later wrote, "when we tired of this, and since the report was spreading throughout the party of what was going on, we decided to strike. I read to a hushed and somewhat terrified audience of party functionaries a statement wherein we declared ourselves 100 percent in support of Trotsky and the Russian Opposition on all the principled questions, and announced our determination to fight along that line to the end." As a consequence, "we were expelled by the joint meeting of the Central Control Commission and the Political Committee."²³

Max Shachtman noted that "the entire Communist Party was astounded, not to say stupefied and even incredulous, at hearing that Cannon had come forward as a supporter of the Russian Opposition. The announcement came as a bombshell, not only to opponents but to supporters. There was nothing in the past position or conduct of the faction that offered the slightest indication of the announcement. . . ."²⁴

Jay Lovestone, who was still secretary general of the Communist Party, hastened to carry out the purge of Trotsky's followers in the CPUSA. Irving Howe and Lewis Coser have noted that "the viciousness of the campaign which developed against them surpassed anything before known in the American radical movement. Jack Stachel, chief assistant in Lovestone's less savory projects, planned and led a raid upon the private apartments of the Trotskyist leaders, rifled their files. . . . Trotskyist newspaper vendors were attacked by party agents and savagely beaten. Cannon's meetings were disrupted and his women comrades publicly called whores."²⁵

Sometimes the campaign of the CPUSA leadership proved to be counterproductive. The party chiefs took the position that "those who are not for us are against us," and every unit of the party was forced to pass resolutions endorsing the action against Cannon and his associates. Anyone who refused to vote in favor of these resolutions without discussion was summarily expelled. As a consequence of this tactic, the newly organized Trotskyists received an important group of recruits in Minneapolis, consisting of people who were not originally favorable to Trotsky's ideas, but refused to condemn them and the Cannonites without knowing the arguments of Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern, and so were themselves expelled.²⁶ For many years the Minneapolis group remained one of the strongest units of the Trotskyist movement in the United States.

In Chicago, too, the tactics of the party leadership won recruits for the new Trotskyist movement. Two of the most important were Albert Glotzer and Arne Swabeck. During a meeting of the Foster and Cannon factions in the city to decide what action to take in the face of what had happened to Cannon, Glotzer was approached by Clarence Hathaway, who had been a student at the Lenin School in Moscow, sent by the Cannonite faction. Hathaway told Glotzer

that he should go along with the expulsion of Cannon, because he, Hathaway, knew from his Moscow contacts that Jay Lovestone, against whom the Cannonites had fought for so long, would soon be removed from the leadership of the CPUSA and control would pass into the hands of the Foster-Cannon factions. When Glotzer refused to follow Hathaway's advice, he and Swabeck were expelled and soon became part of the new Trotskyist organization.²⁷

Albert Glotzer was one of the principal figures in the Communist youth in Chicago. Of Arne Swabeck, Shachtman wrote that "he was active in District 8 in Chicago. He was a district organizer. He was very active in the Chicago Federation of Labor as a delegate to the Chicago Federation from the Painters Union. . . . He comes from Denmark originally, from the valley of Swabeck." He had been a secondary leader in the 1919 Seattle general strike and had been a Cannonite since 1925.²⁸

Establishment of the Communist League of America

The task of organizing a Trotskyist movement in the United States was not an easy one. Cannon, Shachtman, Abern, and several of their other associates had been employees of the Communist Party, directly or indirectly, and with their expulsion their salaries ceased—without even back pay. They had no headquarters, no "apparatus" of any kind. However, within weeks of being expelled they began to publish a newspaper, *The Militant*, the first issue of which was dated November 1928 and which began publication of the famous Trotsky documents as well as announcing the establishment of a new political group.

The first printer of *The Militant* was Joe Cannata, an ex-member of the IWW, who suggested the name for the paper. He also extended credit. The group got financial help from other unexpected sources, including Antoinette Konikow and a group of

Trotsky sympathizers in Boston who had been expelled some time earlier. Max Eastman also gave \$200 toward getting the paper started.²⁹

Expulsion from the CPUSA made it much more difficult to approach those remaining in the party. However, Cannon noted that they soon "discovered" a group of Hungarians who had been expelled shortly before and had developed sympathy for Trotsky's position. He commented that "they certainly looked like an army of a million people to us." There was also a group of Italian followers of Amadeo Bordiga who "worked with us for a while."³⁰

Most recruiting to the new group necessarily had to be on an individual basis. Cannon noted that "we began an energetic correspondence; wherever we knew anybody, or whenever we heard of somebody who was interested, we would write him a long letter."³¹ To a modest degree this recruiting was successful. Cannon noted that "comrades with whom we had been in contact came to our banner in Chicago, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Philadelphia—not big groups as a rule. . . . In some places single individuals took up our fight alone. In New York we picked up a few here and there—individuals. Cleveland, St. Louis and the mine fields of Southern Illinois. This was about the range of our organizational contact in the first period."³²

The Trotskyists were presented a peculiar opportunity to present their views to a considerable number of Communist Party leaders when they asked for and received permission to speak on December 17 to the plenum of the Central Committee of the party to appeal their expulsion. Lovestone permitted this in the hope of snaring some of his Fosterite rivals as "Trotskyite conciliators." Cannon made a two-hour speech to the meeting.³³ However, he does not mention how many, if any, recruits they received as a result.

Cannon also soon went on a "national tour." In fact, his itinerary included only some New England cities and a few in the

Middle West, but the tour served to put him in personal contact with his followers, consolidate the new local Trotskyist groups, and perhaps to recruit a few new members. In at least a few instances new adherents were won because of revulsion against the strong-arm tactics used by the CP leadership to try to break up Trotskyist meetings in various cities.

In February 1929, on the occasion of the CP's Ninth Convention, the Trotskyists first presented their program, ostensibly as a factional document. Cannon noted that "our platform began with our declaration of principles on an international scale, our view of the Russian question, our position on the great theoretical questions at the bottom of the fight in the Russian party—the question of socialism in one country. From there our platform proceeded to national questions, to the trade union questions in the United States, to the detailed problems of party organizations, etc."³⁴

Finally, by the spring of 1929, the Trotskyists had recruited enough people to undertake their first national convention. It met in Chicago, in May, with thirty-one delegates and seventeen alternates, representing about one hundred members.³⁵ The meeting went off without a hitch in spite of Communist Party threats to break it up; the Trotskyists had brought in a number of coal miners from southern Illinois and had the volunteer services of a group of rww members to protect the Trotskyists' right to freedom of speech. The Communists did not seek to carry out their threats.³⁶

As a consequence of this meeting the first U.S. Trotskyist organization—and one of the first such groups anywhere outside the USSR—was established. It was given the title Communist League of America, Left Opposition of the Communist Party. Cannon noted somewhat grandiloquently that "we went from that conference with the confident assurance that the whole future development of the regenerated Communist movement in America, up to the time the proletariat takes power and begins organiz-

ing the socialist society, would trace its origin to that first National Conference of the American Trotskyists at Chicago in May 1929."³⁷

Ideological Position of the CLA

James P. Cannon has sketched the principal elements of the ideological program of the first U.S. Trotskyist organization at the time of its foundation. This program involved four basic elements: their attitude on "the Russian question," their orientation toward organized labor, their stand as a "Communist opposition," and their position in trying to recruit new members.

There were those in the organization and many more outside it who might have joined the Communist League (Opposition) who wanted to repudiate the Soviet Union. This issue, as Cannon summed it up in "its barest essentials," was "whether we should continue to support the Soviet state, the Soviet Union, despite the fact that the direction of it had fallen into the hands of a conservative, bureaucratic caste." In answer, Cannon said, "we took a firm stand in favor of supporting the Soviet Union, of not overturning it, but of trying to reform it through the instrumentality of the party and the Comintern."³⁸

The second issue, concerning the CLA's approach to organized labor, was particularly provoked by the twist in the Comintern line imposed by Stalin, calling for each national Communist Party to withdraw its trade union supporters from existing labor movements to establish its own "Red" trade union organizations. Cannon noted that "our first National Conference took a firm stand against that policy, and declared in favor of operating with the existing labor movement, confining independent unionism to the unorganized field."³⁹

The third issue, whether to continue to regard themselves as integral members of the world Communist movement formally separated from its ranks through no fault of their own, or to establish a frankly new party

completely apart from the Comintern and its national sections, plagued all opposition Communist groups during the early 1930s. Although the Trotskyists were to change their position on this issue a few years later, at the time the Communist League [Opposition] was established it proclaimed itself a Communist "opposition," not a separate party.

Cannon explained and defended this position by saying that "the real vanguard of the proletariat consists of those tens of thousands of workers who have been awakened by the Russian revolution. They are still loyal to the Comintern and to the Communist Party. . . . It is impossible even to get a hearing from these people unless you place yourself on the ground of the party, and strive not to destroy but to reform it, demanding readmission to the party with democratic rights."⁴⁰

The meaning of the "oppositionist" stance of the Trotskyists in this period was summed up well in *The Militant's* report on the Second National Conference of the League. It said that "there was unanimous agreement that our platform is correct, i.e., that our orientation is directly upon the Communist movement, of which the Comintern, and in the United States, the official party is the center, as the only historically progressive force, to which our appeal, despite the blunders and mistakes of its bureaucratic leadership, is addressed for the purpose of reestablishing its Marxian foundation."⁴¹

Cannon summed up the situation saying that "we solved the problem correctly by declaring ourselves a faction of the party and the Comintern. . . . Experience has richly demonstrated the correctness of this decision. . . . The overwhelming majority of our members in the first five years of our existence came from the CP. Thus we built the foundations of a regenerated Communist movement. . . ."⁴²

The fourth basic decision taken by the Trotskyists at their inception concerned the question of where they would principally

concentrate their attention in terms of seeking recruits. Of course, this issue was closely associated with the question of whether they were an "opposition" Communist group or a completely separate organization. The decision was to concentrate on trying to win over people in the Communist Party and its periphery.⁴³

The "Dog Days"

Cannon is authority for the statement that the period between 1929 and 1933 constituted the "dog days" of Trotskyism in the United States.⁴⁴ Not only was the membership small, and the financial resources exceedingly limited, but the Communist League [Opposition] suffered from considerable ideological confusion on the part of many who might otherwise have been recruited to its ranks.

Shachtman later noted that the Trotskyists in the beginning had few people active in the trade unions. "Most of our activity was of a propaganda type, self-education, of classes, of meetings which were in a manner of speaking larger classes—public meetings which were large classes."⁴⁵

With the ascension of Stalin to full power in the Soviet Union and the Comintern he had executed a drastic "left turn," both in Soviet policy and in the policies of the International. Within the USSR Stalin carried out a drastic program of rapid agricultural collectivization and veered the first Five Year Plan toward rapid accumulation of heavy capital goods, while at the same time almost completely substituting the planning mechanism for operating a market economy. Within the International he launched the "Third Period" of superheated revolutionary rhetoric combined with extreme isolation of the Communist parties from all other groups on the left.

To many who might have joined the Trotskyists' ranks it appeared that Stalin was applying the policies which had been advocated by Trotsky. In practical terms the

Trotskyists in the United States and elsewhere found it difficult to differentiate their own positions from those which Stalin was following both in the USSR and abroad. Consequently, the Trotskyists found it difficult to recruit further adherents from Communist ranks.

Some of those people who did come from the CPUSA came for what the Trotskyists regarded as the wrong reasons. These were, according to Cannon, "a lot of dilettantish petty-bourgeois-minded people who couldn't stand any kind of discipline, who had either left the CP or been expelled from it. . . . Many of the newcomers made a fetish of democracy. They . . . desired an organization without any authority or discipline or centralization whatever."⁴⁶

The Trotskyists had some successes in this dog-days period. They succeeded in establishing, particularly in New York City, a few youth groups which began publication of a newspaper, *Young Spartacus*, under the editorship of Emanuel Geltman. The Second National Conference of the Communist League adopted a document, "Theses on the Youth Question," which called for bringing these Spartacus Youth clubs into a national organization and named a National Youth Committee to act as the provisional executive of that organization.⁴⁷

Aside from the work of assuring regular publication of their periodicals, the Trotskyists spent much of their time during these years getting thoroughly acquainted with the ideas of their leader. This was a matter not only of individual study but of innumerable small meetings to discuss and debate Trotsky's ideas and positions. They felt that what Cannon called "the vanguard of the vanguard" had to be thoroughly acquainted with the theories and the notions of strategy and tactics of the man whom they regarded as the true representative of the Great Bolshevik Revolution.

During this period of introversion the Trotskyists did little to seek to develop even modest influence in the labor movement.

Thus, unlike the Lovestoneites, they had no role in the organizing campaign and strikes which revived the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in New York City in the early months of the New Deal in 1933, even though their headquarters were close to the union's most important mass meetings.⁴⁶

The state of affairs in the Communist League can be gauged from the report in *The Militant* concerning the Second National Conference of the organization in September 1931. It noted that delegations were present from branches in Toronto, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Minneapolis and that other branches in Montreal, New Haven, and Richmond had not been able to afford to send delegates. This report commented on difficulties that had been overcome since the first conference almost two years before, noting that "it cannot be denied that since the first conference, that is, during the early period following it, a certain organizational slump set in which naturally also had its political repercussions. The center became greatly weakened, the necessary means for carrying on the work were seriously curtailed and naturally the obstacles in the way contained elements of friction. One of the blows was expressed in the inability to continue the weekly publication of the *Militant* which had begun in November 1928. . . . Yet the great vitality of the organization, the power of the Left Opposition platform made it possible to weather this period with only minor disorganization in a few branches. So much so that capitulations or actual loss of membership during these trying difficulties were exceedingly rare within our ranks." It was noted that "the branches of Boston, Philadelphia and St. Louis, which had witnessed particular difficulties, were reestablished."

The second conference dealt with a Political Report submitted by Shachtman, a trade union discussion led by Arne Swabeck, and relations with the International Left Oppo-

sition. A new National Committee, consisting of Martin Abern, James Cannon, Vincent Dunne, Albert Glotzer, Hugo Oehler, Mas Shachtman, Carl Skoglund, Maurice Spector, and Arne Swabeck, was elected. The session was capped by a dinner at which "a total of 150 plates were set and every place filled with comrades who came to give their enthusiastic indorsement." Some \$207.13 was collected at the dinner "for the future work of the League."⁴⁹

Albert Glotzer has recorded that when he visited Trotsky a few weeks after this second conference of the CLA, "I informed him that the League had approximately 200 members, of which 165 were dues paying. . . . I was able to report that the official journal of the League, *The Militant*, although no longer a weekly paper, had a printing of 3,000 copies of which 2,000 copies circulated around the country."⁵⁰

First Factionalism in the Trotskyist Ranks

Although Cannon was unquestionably the senior figure in the ranks of the Trotskyist organization, there was considerable discontent with his leadership. Cannon's attention to his duties was sometimes sporadic. Mail went unanswered, and the newspaper sometimes did not get mailed out on time. Also, Cannon opposed moves to convert *The Militant* from a biweekly to a weekly, and for the Greek-speaking Trotskyists and the youth to publish their own periodicals. Late in 1929 Cannon disappeared entirely from group activities for three months, and when he returned he offered no explanation for his absence.

As a consequence of growing unhappiness about the way in which he was conducting the League's affairs, the first anti-Cannon faction was formed. This occurred in late 1929 or early 1930, and the group was headed by Shachtman, Abern, and Glotzer (then of Chicago). They finally decided early in 1930 to send Shachtman to Europe to

make personal contact with Trotsky and explain to him this unsatisfactory state of affairs.

This division in the ranks was only the first of several such crises that were to develop between Cannon and the group centering on Shachtman; this was to culminate a decade later in a definitive split between the two elements. On this occasion the schism was soon healed, although in 1934 the Shachtman-Abem-Glotzer group again organized a bloc against Cannon. This new split was ended unilaterally when Shachtman once again mended fences with Cannon.⁵¹

There were undoubtedly several reasons for the early development of this division within U.S. Trotskyist ranks. One was certainly organizational, in the sense that then and later Cannon was to seem sporadically uninterested in routine work, which complicated the problems of maintaining a stable organization.

In addition, there were undoubtedly personality clashes. Cannon was substantially older than his critics. He was exceedingly proud of his working-class background and tended to see his opponents—both in the days of the Communist Party and in the Trotskyist movement—as “New York intellectuals,” resenting what he conceived to be their lack of knowledge of the “reality” of U.S. working-class life. There was certainly some truth in Cannon’s analysis: Shachtman, at least, had an intellectual brilliance and capacity for theoretical exegesis and debate which Cannon lacked. In addition, Shachtman had a caustic wit which he undoubtedly turned against Cannon when they disagreed. However, it was not until 1939–40 that any serious differences in principle developed between the two groups.

The Role of James P. Cannon

Many years later, when he was long out of the official Trotskyist movement, Shachtman tried to assess Cannon’s role in the

early years of the Trotskyist movement. He commented that “the American Trotskyist movement was born with two distinct advantages.”⁵² One of these was that it was formed only in 1928, by which time Trotsky had clearly developed his distinctive ideological position. The other was “one derived from the acknowledged leader of the organization . . . in our case from Cannon. We have listened to many attempts to ignore or deny this fact but we never heard one of any merit.”⁵³

This advantage, according to Shachtman, was that “Cannon gave the American Trotskyist movement a personal link with the preceding revolutionary movements and therewith helped to preserve the continuity of the movement, a factor disdained by the dilettante and inordinately worshipped by the bureaucrat but nevertheless regarded as highly important and precious by any responsible militant.”

Shachtman noted that Cannon had been a significant younger leader of the IWW before World War I, had been one of the first supporters of the Bolshevik Revolution, had led the fight against “illegality” and had been the first chairman of the legal Communist Party. Furthermore, “from the beginning of the movement, he was outstanding and steady in his insistence that the organization would never amount to much unless it oriented itself primarily and mainly toward the proletariat, unless it rooted itself strong and deep in the organized labor movement, unless it became itself an overwhelmingly proletarian movement.”⁵⁴

Shachtman argued that while Cannon “left far behind him the prejudices which most Wobblies carried as their distinguishing badge, he did not [or could not] free himself in reality from the worst of them—that corroding contempt for theory.”⁵⁵ Shachtman claimed that in the Trotskyist movement “they expected their leaders to show a respect for Marxian theory that would be manifested in a *knowledge* of its historical development and an *ability* to employ that

knowledge in dealing with problems of the day. Cannon had neither the knowledge nor the ability, as was well known to all his old friends and critics, but above all to himself. . . .⁵⁶

As a consequence of this situation, Shachtman claimed that "Cannon choked off the potential for political development in literally dozens of comrades who came under his influence by instilling in them a disdainful attitude toward 'theory' and 'theorizers' and 'intellectuals' in general. His insistence on a proletarian orientation for the movement—so incontestably right in and of itself, now as much as at the beginning—was subverted to the denigration of 'theorizers' and people 'abnormally' concerned with analyzing political and theoretical problems."⁵⁷

Whether or not all of Shachtman's strictures on Cannon were entirely correct, it is clear that in many of his speeches and public papers Cannon did tend to denounce "theorizers" and "intellectuals." It is also almost certainly true that the perceptions of both Cannon and Shachtman (and others) concerning the respective role of the intellectual and ideological leader and the organizational chieftain were important sources of friction both in these early factional conflicts in the Communist League and in subsequently internal struggles within the ranks of U.S. Trotskyism.

The Evolution of U.S. Trotskyism

The First Contacts with Trotsky

Max Shachtman's trip to Prinkipo early in 1930 was the first personal contact which his American followers had with Leon Trotsky, although there had been some previous correspondence. At the time of the expulsion of the Trotskyists from the CPUSA they were unable to establish any direct contact with the Russian leader, since he was in internal exile in Soviet Central Asia. However, early in 1929 Trotsky was ex-

pelled from the Soviet Union and began the first stage of his last exile by setting up residence on the island of Prinkipo, in Turkey.

Once Trotsky was out of the Soviet Union his U.S. followers sought to establish contact. Cannon noted that "I wrote him a letter; we soon received an answer," and added that "thereafter, except for the time he was interned in Norway, until the day of his death, we were never without the most intimate contact with the founder and inspirer of our movement."⁵⁸ Trotsky's reply to Cannon's first letter arrived before the founding convention of the Communist League of America in May 1929. Cannon noted that "his answer, as all of his letters, as all of his articles, was permeated with political wisdom. His friendly advice helped us in solving our problems."⁵⁹

Shachtman was only the first American Trotskyist to see Trotsky in Turkey. Among those who made the pilgrimage was Albert Glotzer, who went about a year after Shachtman's visit. He ended up staying for two months, while Trotsky worked on his *History of the Russian Revolution*, for which he was under contract with an American publisher.⁶⁰

The Weisbord Group

During these years a second group in the United States sought affiliation with International Trotskyism. This was the Communist League of Struggle, headed by Albert Weisbord. Weisbord had been a Communist Party trade union leader of some importance in the 1920s. He was a Harvard graduate who had undertaken to organize the textile workers in the large Botany Mills plants in Passaic and Garfield, New Jersey. In the winter of 1925-26 the union which Weisbord had established called a strike. Weisbord had been jailed, all strike meetings had been banned, and Socialist leader Norman Thomas had made a famous speech on the strikers' behalf in Garfield which had brought his arrest, too. Finally, mainly due

to Thomas's influence Weisbord was released, but the strike had been broken.⁶¹ Two years later, Weisbord organized the National Textile Workers Union, the second of the "dual unions" established by the Communists on directives from the Communist International.⁶² However, in 1929 Weisbord was expelled from the Communist Party. Although he apparently had some sympathy for Trotsky and his ideas, and the Communist League of America was already in existence, Weisbord did not join the CLA but organized his own group. For several years he sought to prove to Trotsky that the Communist League of Struggle was more Trotskyist than the CLA.

The first exchange of correspondence between Weisbord and Trotsky appears to have occurred in late 1931. In reply to a letter from Weisbord, Trotsky sent a copy of his letter to the National Executive Committee of the CLA. Trotsky wrote, "I cannot adopt your standpoint. Your criticism of the American League seems to me one-sided, artificial and terribly exaggerated. You throw the League and the right wing together, which shows that you utterly disregard the fitness of things. You make fun of the publishing activity of the League and counterpose your 'mass action' to it. Have you any mass activity behind you? Before one turns to the masses, one must construct a principled basis. One begins as a propaganda group and develops in the direction of mass action."⁶³

Weisbord persisted. In May 1932 he visited Trotsky and they had "several talks." In a subsequent letter written to the CLS at Weisbord's request, Trotsky indicated the principal issues he thought separated that organization from International Trotskyism. Trotsky first mentioned the issue of working for the formation of a labor party in the United States, a position which Trotsky opposed at that time. He wrote that "on the question of the labor party your organization is very close to Lovestone's, which is notoriously opportunistic. . . . while taking or try-

ing to take a Marxist position toward past events in other countries you take an opportunist position toward future events in your own country. I believe that without a radical revision of your position on the central question of the party, an effective rapprochement between your organization and the International Left Opposition cannot be realized."⁶⁴ Trotsky then cited another subject of disagreement: "Up to now your group has rejected our definition of the international Stalinist faction as bureaucratic centrism."⁶⁵ He went on to chastise Weisbord and his friends for their attitude toward the Communist League. "To a considerable degree your criticism of the American League starts from wrong premises. . . . At the same time you give your criticism a character so immoderate, exaggerated and embittered that we are forced to view you as an ideological trend not in the camp of the International Opposition but of its adversaries, if not of its open enemies."⁶⁶

Insofar as the Weisbord criticism that the CLA was not sufficiently involved in mass work was concerned, Trotsky rejoined, "Let us admit for a minute that the American League lacks this or that possibility for mass work. I agree that your group would be able to complement the work of the American League in that respect. But mass work must be carried out on the basis of definite principles and methods. Until the necessary unanimity on a number of fundamental questions is attained, disputes on 'mass work' will inevitably remain fruitless."⁶⁷ Finally, Trotsky told Weisbord that "you must keep clearly in mind that the road to the International Left Opposition leads through the American League; a second road does not exist. Unification with the American League is possible only on the basis of the unity of principles and methods, which must be formulated theoretically and verified by experience."⁶⁸

Negotiations did take place between the Communist League of America and the Communist League of Struggle. However,

these discussions were suspended by the CLA in October 1932, and there is no indication that they were renewed.⁶⁹ Weisbord finally gave up Marxism-Leninism altogether and became an American Federation of Labor organizer.⁷⁰

The "Turn to the Masses"

During 1933 the Communist League of America substantially changed its orientation. Instead of talking largely to themselves, and seeking to recruit on an individual basis from the Communist Party, they began to seek to propagate their ideas and to recruit new members to their ranks on a much wider basis. There were several reasons for this change. One was Trotsky's decision, after the collapse of the German Communist Party in the face of the advent to power of the Nazi regime, that the Comintern and its national parties could not be reformed. Trotsky's new orientation meant that the Trotskyist groups should no longer consider themselves "oppositions" but rather full-fledged rivals and competitors of the national Communist parties, and that they should work toward establishing an alternative to the existing Stalinist-controlled International—a new and "genuine" Communist International.

The renewed militancy of the organized labor movement, starting in the early months of the New Deal, was another factor contributing to the change in outlook and practice of the Trotskyists. For the first time they saw an opportunity to assume some role in leading the workers, who were rushing to organize both in the old unions of the American Federation of Labor and in more or less spontaneous new groups established outside the AFL.

Developments within other elements of the radical movement also stimulated the Trotskyists to change their strategy and tactics. On the one hand, the outbreak of violent factionalism within the Socialist Party (still the largest of the radical groups) en-

couraged not only the Trotskyists but the Communists and Lovestoneites to try to fish in the SP's troubled waters. At the same time other new radical groups were appearing, the most significant of which, from the Trotskyists' point of view, was the American Workers Party, which A. J. Muste's Conference for Progressive Labor Action had set about establishing.

The change in orientation of the Trotskyists was reflected in various ways. For one thing, they began to publish *The Militant* three times a week. For another, they organized national tours for several party leaders, including Cannon, Shachtman, and Hugo Oehler. In addition, they now began to try to establish contacts with elements in the Socialist Party and Young People's Socialist League as well as within the Musteite group and even with the Lovestoneites.

The earliest serious involvement of the Trotskyists in organized labor took place in New York City, where in the latter part of 1933 there was a recrudescence of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union. The Trotskyists had one member in that union who, "after years of isolation . . . suddenly found himself an influential figure."⁷¹ Another member of the Communist League, B. J. Field, described by Cannon as "a man of many intellectual accomplishments," was sent into the union. Through his ability to speak French he assumed leadership of a group of French chefs who were the union's backbone. Through their influence he was chosen as union secretary.

Field had been an early member of the Communist League. In 1932 he had been expelled from the CLA because, by Trotsky's description of the case, "he disturbs the unity of the organization and threatens its ability to act."⁷² He had then gone to Prinkipo and stayed with Trotsky for some time. Trotsky clearly valued his capacities as an economist and statistician and had circulated throughout the International Left Opposition a document of Field's which Trotsky described as being "an evaluation

of the immediate cyclical tendencies of the world market."⁷³

There had been some exchange of correspondence between the CLA leadership and Trotsky concerning the latter's friendly treatment of Field.⁷⁴ However, at the end of 1932 Field and his wife, Esther, had been the only Americans present at the informal conference of Trotsky with his followers during his short visit to Copenhagen.⁷⁵ Upon Field's return to the United States he was readmitted to the League and became an economic writer for *The Militant*.⁷⁶

Early in 1934 the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union declared a general strike of its members in New York City hotels and restaurants. Field led this strike, but the Trotskyists soon became upset by his failure to consult with the League on his conduct of the walkout. After remonstrating with him various times, the National Committee of the League finally expelled him from its ranks once again, while the strike was still under way. The strike was finally resolved on a basis not very satisfactory to the union.⁷⁷

Once out of the Communist League, Field establish an organization of his own, the League for a Revolutionary Workers Party. It established fraternal contacts with a group of disaffected Canadian Trotskyists and for a while maintained a kind of international organization.⁷⁸ The Fieldites continued to consider themselves as being broadly aligned with Trotskyism. At the time of the expulsion of the Trotskyists from the Socialist Party in 1937 the Fieldite paper *Labor Front* commented that "as for the position of the LRWP, our policy remains what it has been: to approach such groups as the Trotskyites, with whom we have many things politically in common, with a view to practical collaboration and political discussion in order to test the possibilities of political agreement and of organizational merger."⁷⁹ The Fieldites did not survive World War II.

One notable event reflecting the new orientation of the Trotskyists after 1933 was

their challenging Jay Lovestone to a debate on whether there was need for a new International, Cannon arguing in favor, while Lovestone supported the need to "reform and unify the Communist International." The debate, held on March 5, 1934, was attended by more than a thousand people, "the biggest audience that we had ever spoken to on a political issue since our expulsion," according to Cannon.⁸⁰

The Minneapolis Strikes

Although the New York hotel workers' strike, the Trotskyists' debut in trade union activity, did not result in any lasting gain in Trotskyist influence in organized labor, a series of walkouts of teamsters in Minneapolis a few weeks later gave the Communist League its first real foothold in the trade union movement. This activity began with a strike in unionized coal yards, led by a group of Trotskyites who were working there, which was quickly won by the workers. This success triggered a rapid general organizing campaign among the teamsters of the city, led by an Organizing Committee made up in large part of members of the Communist League.

Once they had a large percentage of the city's teamsters organized, the Trotskyists and their colleagues in the Organizing Committee began planning for a general strike to force the employers to recognize the union, Local 574 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. They established a strike headquarters, equipped not only with a kitchen to serve the strikers and their families but a dispensary staffed with a doctor and nurses to take care of strikers who might get hurt on the picket line.

The first general teamsters strike took place in May and lasted only six days. It was finally settled on the basis of employer recognition of the union, although no economic gains were made at that time, a fact which provoked strident Communist Party

attacks on the Trotskyist leaders for having "betrayed" the workers.

However, the May general strike was only a prelude to a much more serious walkout two months later. When the newly recognized union presented collective bargaining demands, the Citizens Alliance, an open-shop employers' organization of long standing, began to encourage resistance to the union's demands. On the other hand, the union, and particularly the Trotskyists of the Organizing Committee, mobilized the backing of the Central Labor Union of the local AFL to support the teamsters in their demands and in a new walkout should it occur.

The second teamsters' general strike in Minneapolis began on July 16, 1934. This time the walkout lasted five weeks and became a fundamental showdown between the city's organized labor movement and the open shop employers who had long dominated Minneapolis. The leadership of the Communist League of America became very much involved in this walkout. In addition to giving it wide publicity in *The Militant* and through other media, Max Shachtman and a sympathizer, Herbert Solow, were brought in to handle press relations on the spot. Albert Goldman was brought up from Chicago to serve as a general counsel for the strikers, and Hugo Oehler came from New York to organize the unemployed in support of the walkout. James Cannon was on hand to give general political advice to the Trotskyist strike leaders.

Several of these people as well as the Trotskyists among the strike leaders participated in the negotiations with mediators sent in by the federal government as well as with state officials. When Governor Floyd Olson finally declared martial law, Cannon and Shachtman were immediately arrested and after being held overnight were "exiled" to St. Paul, across the Mississippi River, whence they continued to confer each evening with strike leaders.

Another aid which the Trotskyists gave

to the strike was the issuance of a special newspaper for the occasion, the *Daily Organizer*. Although it was distributed to anyone who asked for it, those taking copies were asked for a contribution and this income largely financed the strike.

After five weeks the strike was finally ended with "a settlement which was a substantial victory for the union." This walkout established the leadership of the Trotskyists in Local 574 of the Teamsters as well as assuring them for nearly a decade of a leading place in the organized labor movement in Minneapolis. This leadership, ironically, was to be the major cause for the persecution and prosecution of national Trotskyist leaders by the Roosevelt government during World War II.⁸¹

The Workers Party of the United States

The Formation of the Workers Party

As part of its "turn towards the masses," instead of concentrating its attention solely on recruiting individuals from the Communist Party, the Communist League developed contacts with, among other groups, the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, which early in 1934 had been converted into the American Workers Party. Shortly, these contacts developed into serious discussions of the possibility of merging the two groups.

The Conference for Progressive Labor Action was headed by a former Presbyterian minister, A. J. Muste, a pacifist of socialist orientation. In the 1920s and early 1930s Muste had established and run the Brookwood Labor College in Westchester County, New York, an institution for training union officials and organizers which had enjoyed the support principally of unions under the influence of the Socialist Party. The Conference for Progressive Labor Action was first established as an arm of Brookwood, to coordinate and give direction to practical train-

ing in the field for those who had studied at the college.

Muste and those who were closest to him began in the early 1930s to develop their own political perspective. Unhappy with both the Socialist and Communist parties, they developed the thesis that there was need for a third radical party standing somewhere between the two major radical groups. This orientation brought them into particularly close contact with the Trotskyists.

Clearly, so long as the Trotskyist self-perception was that of being "opposition" Communists, they had little sympathy for the orientation of the Musteites. However, once Leon Trotsky had decided that his followers should give up the idea of trying to reform the Comintern and its parties and try instead to establish a completely separate movement, there was ground for discussion with Muste and his followers. This was particularly true after Trotsky proclaimed "the French Turn," that is, the policy of entering socialist parties in various countries to capture them if that was feasible and in any case to recruit as many new supporters from their ranks as possible.

There is a difference of opinion among Trotskyists who participated in the merger with the Musteites as to whether this was seen by Trotsky's American followers as an application of the French Turn. Cannon clearly said of the French Turn that "we translated it for America as an injunction to hasten the amalgamation with the American Workers Party."⁸² Albert Glotser, on the other hand, has argued that the merger with the AWP was not seen as an application of the French Turn, but rather was entered into on the quite practical grounds that it would double the Trotskyists' membership and that both groups had had somewhat similar experiences in leading segments of the revolving organized labor movement, the CLA in Minneapolis and the Musteites in an important auto workers' strike at the Auto-Lite plant in Toledo, Ohio.⁸³

The American Workers Party (AWP) had been established by the Musteites early in 1934. Among other things, it called in its program for establishment of a new International, a position similar to that the Trotskyists had recently adopted. It was also highly critical of both the U.S. Socialist and Communist parties and the internationals to which they were affiliated.⁸⁴ However, the AWP was a heterogeneous movement. It included elements such as Louis Budenz and Arnold Johnson, who were leaning toward the Communist Party and joined it soon after the merger with the Trotskyists. There were trade union elements recruited in the Auto-Lite strike and in the process of the Musteites' organization of a movement of the unemployed. There were such people as James Burnham, who were at the moment in agreement with the Trotskyists on most issues. There were also some trade union officials such as J. B. S. Hardman (J. B. Salutsky), editor of *Advance*, the newspaper of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, who were more socialist than Bolshevik.

In spite of the different elements within the AWP, the Trotskyists were anxious to merge with it. They made such an offer in the summer of 1934. Then after the conclusion of the Minneapolis teamsters' strike they set out in earnest to bring about a merger. Cannon has noted that "we called on them to unite with us to form a new party to conquer the world. We reopened negotiations with a letter of September 7, requesting the AWP to take a positive stand in favor of unification and appoint a committee to discuss with us the program and the organization details. This time we received a prompt reply from the American Workers Party."⁸⁵

The Trotskyists were more interested in getting a "correct" program for the new party than in the organizational arrangements within the new group. On the latter point they proposed parity, both in the new national committee and in the principal ex-

ecutive posts in the new organization, for people coming from the Communist League and the AWP. After a number of bargaining sessions in which Muste, J. B. Salutsky, Sidney Hook, and James Burnham, among others, participated for the Musteites, and Cannon, Shachtman, Martin Abern, and Hugo Oehler for the CLA, agreement was reached. It was decided that each organization would hold its own national convention to ratify the new program and constitution of the Workers Party, and then a joint convention should meet formally to establish the party. The first sessions were held from November 26-30, 1934, and the founding convention of the Workers Party met on December 1-2, 1934.⁸⁶

After the unification convention one more issue of each of the old groups' newspapers, *The Militant* and *Labor Action*, was published, each with the slogan "For the Workers Party of the United States." Each gave details on the convention of the CLA and the AWP and of the unity convention and announced that the two publications would be succeeded by *The New Militant*.

The Militant, in its account of the CLA convention, noted that Arne Swabeck had reported existence of twenty-one branches "in the major industrial centers from the Atlantic to the Pacific." There were forty-three delegates and "the composition of the delegates was overwhelmingly proletarian, many being deeply rooted in the trade union movement." The convention was principally concerned with Cannon's report on "the international question, primarily the recent Plenum of the International League to which he was a delegate and the so-called 'French question,'" and with Shachtman's report on negotiations with the American Workers Party for unity. Although debate on the Cannon report took two days and "a minority of comrades maintained that it was neither necessary nor correct to enter the French Socialist Party," the motion to endorse the resolution of the international plenum was passed by "an overwhelming

majority." After a short discussion the convention unanimously endorsed merger with the AWP.⁸⁷

Labor Action noted that most of the debate at the AWP convention preceding unity had dealt with the Declaration of Principles of the new Workers Party. It also noted that "Because the AWP had no youth organization, it was decided that while youth members of the party were to be placed on the executive committee of the Spartacus Youth League (to become subsequently the youth organization of the new party) it would not be carried out on the 50-50 basis."⁸⁸ Another article in *Labor Action* reported on the convention of the Spartacus Youth League which met just after that of the Workers Party. Some thirty-eight delegates were in attendance, representing 250 "young workers," coming from New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Youngstown, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Canada. The article noted that "fraternal delegates from the former AWP attended the convention and took an active part in the deliberations."⁸⁹

Program of the Workers Party

The name of Leon Trotsky was not mentioned in the *Declaration of Principles and Constitution of the Workers Party of the U.S.* On all essential issues, however, the program of the new party conformed to the ideas then held by the Trotskyists. It proclaimed that "The Workers Party of the U.S. is founded on the great principles of revolutionary theory and practice stated by Marx and Lenin and tested by the experience of the class struggle on an international scale, above all in the Russian Revolution of 1917 (the 'October Revolution')."⁹⁰

The new party was to be "Bolshevik" in organizational terms. The founding document proclaimed that "every member is obligated to observe discipline in action. The administration of the party is centralized. Lower units are subordinate to the higher units. The National Committee as the rep-

representative of the entire organization, elected at the Convention, has full authority to act for the party and to enforce discipline of subordinate units."⁹¹

The Declaration of Principles proclaimed the need for the workers to "take power and put an end to the destructive course of capitalist dictatorship." It further proclaimed that "the fundamental mass instrument of this struggle for power, forged in the course of united actions of the workers, will be the Workers' Councils [Soviets]."⁹² Furthermore, "the revolutionary party likewise of necessity leads the working class in the consolidation of its power after the victory, in the organization of socialist economy, in the suppression of internal counter-revolutionary enemies, and in wars of the workers' states against capitalist states. The role of the party as the leader of the class continues until all forms of class organization, including the state and the party, are finally dissolved in the classless society."⁹³

The Workers Party also adopted the Trotskyist position on the USSR. It proclaimed, "the Soviet Union is a workers' state, product of the Russian revolution and beacon light of inspiration to the workers of the entire world. . . . The unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against capitalist attack is an elementary duty of every worker. . . . Fundamentally this real defense of the Soviet Union depends not upon the League of Nations, non-aggression pacts, or any such measures, but upon successful workers' revolutions in other countries."⁹⁴

Finally, the Trotskyist line on the need for a new International was proclaimed in the founding document of the Workers Party. It read, "A new, i.e., a Fourth, International, based on the theoretic and strategic principles laid down by Marx and Lenin, representing the historic continuity of the international revolutionary movement, and applying these basic principles to the historical realities of the present stage of capitalist decline, must be built." It pledged to cooperate with any parties "which stand on the

same fundamental program as our own, and to cooperate with them in the elaboration of a complete world program and the speediest possible establishment of the New International."⁹⁵

U.S. Trotskyism: The French Turn in the United States

The Workers Party of the U.S. had hardly been formed when a deep schism developed. This division centered on the French Turn, or specifically on the possibility that the Workers Party might seek to enter the U.S. Socialist Party. Both Cannon and Shachtman favored such a move when the opportunity presented itself, while the opposition was led principally by Hugo Oehler and Thomas Stamm, both members of the Political Committee of the Workers Party, and for a while by Muste, the party's national secretary.

Early Activities of the Workers Party

In the meantime, the Workers Party had gotten off to what appeared to be a very good start. Soon after it was established, National Chairman Cannon and National Secretary Muste took off across the country on an organizing tour. Cannon reported that "we were received with enthusiasm along the way. One could notice in the radical labor movement a general spirit of appreciation of the fact that a process of unification had begun after the long period of disintegration and splits."¹

The Cannon-Muste tour lasted about two months. They traveled together through the East and Middle West, ending this phase of their trip in Minneapolis where they received a particularly enthusiastic reception from the ex-CLA leaders and rank and file, still basking in the afterglow of their victories in the local labor movement. From Minneapolis Cannon and Muste went in different directions, Muste heading south and

Cannon proceeding on to California where the Trotskyists were beginning to gain some strength.

The Workers Party also took some steps to try to take advantage of the momentum created by the unification of the CLA and AWP to try to bring other Marxist-Leninist groups into their merged organization. To this end, they sent a letter signed by A. J. Muste to the U.S. Proletarian Party, pointing out the establishment of the WP and asking for "a serious objective discussion on this urgent question of further unification of the revolutionary forces, thus providing added impetus to the building of the new revolutionary party and the new international."²

The Proletarian Party was established fifteen years before when the Michigan organization which had been part of the left wing of the Socialist Party refused to join either of the two original Communist groups, the Communist Party and Communist Labor Party, and remained independent. It proclaimed itself communist, supported the Soviet Union, but had certain peculiar ideas of its own which kept it separated from the rest of the radical movement. There is no evidence that it gave any more friendly reception to the overtures of the Workers Party for unification than it had given to the Lovestoneites' proposals a couple of years before.

Meanwhile, the Workers Party had announced a "Program of Action" soon after it was established. This called, among other things, for doubling the party membership within six months, raising a \$5,000 "Party Foundation Fund" within sixty days, building the paid circulation of the *New Militant* to 10,000 and that of the party's "theoretical" magazine, *New International*, to 6,000. They also proclaimed their intention to send district organizers to at least five parts of the country, to "organize a national Party educational system" (including the first semester of a resident school in New York), to publish one "popular agitational pamphlet"

each month, and to "launch an organization of the Left-progressive wing in the trade unions."³

There is no question but that the Workers Party's reach exceeded its grasp in this ambitious program, in spite of the initial enthusiasm which accompanied the establishment of the organization. Undoubtedly one of the reasons why this was the case was the early onset of factional fighting within the party.

The Oehlerite Split

The French Turn problem first came into the open at an Active Workers Conference of the Workers Party held in Pittsburgh in March 1935. This was supposed to be a meeting of "party activists . . . come to a central place to discuss practical work, report on experiences, get acquainted with one another, etc."⁴ However, those opposed to the French Turn insisted on bringing up that issue at the meeting, with strong support from Joseph Zack Kornfedder, a long-time Stalinist who had recently come over to the Trotskyists because of opposition to Stalin's abandonment of the sectarianism of the Comintern's Third Period. Muste opposed the raising of political issues at the Active Workers Conference and was supported by Cannon and Shachtman. Cannon noted that "he pushed them back a little bit at Pittsburgh, but we settled nothing."⁵

The next serious quarrel over the French Turn issue came at the June 1935 Plenum of the Workers Party. At that meeting Muste aligned himself with Oehler and Martin Abern, who also opposed the idea of entering the Socialist Party. They sought firm commitment of the Workers Party against the French Turn in principle and against entry into the U.S. Socialist Party in particular. In contrast, the Cannon-Shachtman group urged "major attention to the Left Wing and all developments in the Socialist Party." However, given the fact that the Trotskyists could not have been admitted to the Socialist Party at that moment even if they had

unanimously favored the idea—since the Socialists would not have admitted them—the Cannon-Shachtman position had in practice to be somewhat equivocal.

James Cannon has noted that he and Shachtman suggested that the wp's emphasis on events in the Socialist Party be expressed in three ways:

[1] By numerous articles in our press analyzing the developments in the Socialist Party addressing ourselves to the Left Wing workers, offering them advice and criticism in a friendly way. . . . [2] By instructing our members to establish personal contacts among the Left Socialists, and try to get them interested in questions of principle, political discussions, joint meetings with us, etc. [3] Form Trotskyist fractions in the Socialist Party. Send in a group—30 or 40 members—to join the Socialist Party, and work inside it in the interests of the Bolshevik education of the Left Wing.⁶

The result of the June plenum were summed up by *New Militant*. An article entitled "Plenum of N. C. of W. P. Spikes False Rumors," began, "The June Plenum of the National Committee of the wp took note of rumors to the effect that there are leaders and members of the wp who advocate that the wp should join or merge with the Socialist Party." It then went on in bold print to say, "Occasionally it is necessary to take account of rumor and gossip, no matter how absurd and irresponsible it may be, simply because it is so persistent. Solely on this ground, the Plenum hereby states that all such reports are absolutely without foundation, that no leaders or members of the wp advocate or have advocated any such program."⁷

The Cannon-Shachtman group had a minority at the June 1935 plenum, but the factional struggle continued. The Oehler-Stamm group was by no means uninterested in the struggle then going on within the Socialist Party and the possibility that the Trotskyists could recruit substantial num-

bers of members as a result. However, their approach to the problem of recruiting within the SP was different from that of Cannon and Shachtman.

The Oehler-Stamm group sought to bring substantial numbers of Left Wing Socialists out of their party, hopefully as an organized group, which would merge with the Workers Party. To this end they entered into negotiations with a number of members of the far left Revolutionary Policy Committee in the Socialist Party, looking toward a possible merger of that group with the Trotskyists. When Oehler and Stamm reported these talks to the Political Committee of the WP, a negotiating committee was officially established, headed by Cannon and from which Oehler and Stamm were excluded. In due time Oehler and Stamm found that Cannon had not been urging the Socialists to quit their party but rather to continue to fight within it. So Oehler and Stamm again made contact with the Revolutionary Policy Committee people, which led to nothing in terms of merger but did result in Oehler and Stamm being brought up on charges before the Control Commission of the Workers Party. At that point, they were censured.⁸

The final showdown on this issue came at a new plenum in October 1935. There, a demand of the Oehler-Stamm group that they be permitted to publish their own factional organ was rejected in a resolution written by Max Shachtman. The Plenum also passed a motion by Muste—who had by then abandoned his alliance with Oehler and Stamm—which gave Oehler and Stamm “a stern warning to cease and desist from further violations of party discipline. They disregarded the warning and continued with systematic violations of party discipline,” according to James Cannon, who added that “on that ground they were expelled from the party shortly after the October Plenum.”⁹

Later Evolution of Oehlerites

Once out of the Workers Party, the Oehler-Stamm group established their own organi-

zation, the Revolutionary Workers League of the U.S. As the Trotskyists had been an “opposition” to the official Communist Party, the Oehlerites became a left wing “opposition” to the official Trotskyites, devoting most of their energies, at least in their early years, to trying to win converts from their ranks.

Sidney Lens has noted that at its inception the Revolutionary Workers League had about two hundred members.

Clearly the RWL misjudged its potential, yet it was made up of a remarkably competent group of people. Dozens of RWL members who later drifted away became immensely successful in the outside world. Two became editors of *Fortune* magazine. My good friend Joe Fox became head of a large cafeteria union in New York; another ex-comrade is still vice president of a national union with almost half a million members; a sympathizer from Southern Illinois who briefly joined the RWL became the secretary-treasurer of another good-sized national union. At least half a dozen became college professors, an equal number well-to-do businessmen, one a top civil servant in New York. . . .¹⁰

For some time the RWL was able to develop a modest base in the rapidly growing trade union movement. They were involved in organizing department store workers in New York, the unemployed in New Jersey, taxi drivers in Washington, D.C., and the auto workers in New York where for some years an RWL member was head of Local 205 of the UAW. Lens has noted that “The RWL, too, had a rank-and-file base from which to start and we developed good personal relations with many of the noncommunist officials in the UAW—men like Dick Frankenstein, a national vice president. . . .”¹¹

However, as Lens noted, the sectarianism of the Oehlerites ultimately lost them whatever trade union influence they had acquired. Typical was the case described by Lens of Local 205. He noted that “the other

side of this purist attitude was a growing tension between the RWL leadership, which insisted on further 'politicalization'—that is, raising the issue of a six-hour day, worker control of production, and so on—and Ziggy," the head of Local 205. Lens added that "a middle ground could have been found, perhaps, but it wasn't and the recriminations became ever sharper until Ziggy resigned from the League, leaving us with nothing but a memory for our efforts."¹²

Among the principal figures in the League was Russell Blackwell, who went under the name of Rosario Negrete. When the Civil War broke out in Spain, the Oehlerites decided to send Negrete to Spain. There he worked for some time with the left wing of the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM), and sent back glowing reports of his successes with them. As a result, Hugo Oehler himself decided to go to Spain. Oehler soon became disenchanted with the situation and started to return home. However, he was arrested by police controlled by the Communist Party and was allowed to leave Spain only after intervention by the U.S. Embassy. Negrete had an even harder time getting out of Spain, spending some time in a Spanish GPU dungeon. He too finally got out as the result of U.S. Embassy intervention.¹³

The Oehlerites' position on the Spanish Civil War exemplifies their general orientation in their first years. At the time the Socialist Party was trying to recruit volunteers to fight in the Loyalist army in a so-called Debs Column, the Revolutionary Workers League issued "an Open Letter to the Friends of the Debs Column." In it they stated that "the column is going to defend at the same time the Peoples Front capitalist government. . . . The Debs column when it places itself at the disposal of the People's Front Government, becomes a tool in the hands of one section of capitalism against another section." The letter ended with a series of slogans, all printed in capital letters, which demanded "Break with the So-

cialist program and sponsorship; Build a new Marxist Party in Spain; Create Soviets; Nationalize Industry and Banks; Workers Control of Production, Land to the Peasants; etc."¹⁴ These indicated not only the extreme left position of the group but also its ignorance of the real revolution which had occurred [under Anarchist influence] in Loyalist Spain, particularly in Catalonia and Aragon, in the early period of the Civil War.¹⁵

The Oehlerites succeeded in getting together a species of International of their own, "The International Contact Commission." It consisted not only of the Revolutionary Workers League of the U.S.A., but also of the Central Committee of the Red Front of Greater Germany, and the Leninist League of Scotland.¹⁶ This commission issued a publication called *International News*.

The Oehlerites continued to maintain a Trotskyist position on most essential matters, including the question of the nature of the Soviet Union. At the time of the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 their newspaper, *The Fighting Worker*, declared that "the workers of the world must come to the aid of the Soviet Union in its revolutionary war of defense against imperialism and its fascist agents who hope to make a colony out of the Soviet Union." This same article speculated on the possibility of "a semi-truce" between Britain and Germany, and even that Britain "will even, despite any promises, come to the aid of Germany, to accomplish the overthrow of the Soviet Union." The article observed that "it is now clear that the Red Army seizures of Baltic areas were DEFENSIVE steps against an Imperialist attack under German leadership."¹⁷

A month later the Revolutionary Workers League announced, in connection with the indictment of the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, that it "has written to the SWP and offered its full support in this struggle." The announcement called for "a broad united front whose main task will be to mo-

bilize the aggressive support of the broad masses."¹⁸

The Oehlerites themselves were expecting to be persecuted by the Roosevelt administration, and they prepared to go underground. Sidney Lens has noted that "we rented a room on Huron Street where we stored files. Oehler moved to Denver where he kept his address a secret, even from me. And a couple of other comrades went into hiding, for both personal and political reasons." Lens added that "it was all unnecessary, however, for there were no arrests or convictions of radicals after Pearl Harbor. The only problem we in the *rwl* had to contend with was the periodic refusal of the Post Office to mail our paper, the *Fighting Worker*. Even that was rectified, however."¹⁹

The Oehlerites continued in existence until some time after World War II. In their decade-long career they suffered a number of splits. In 1938 Thomas Stamm, coleader of the group, broke away to form a Revolutionary Workers League of his own. The principal source of his dissidence, apparently, was a belief that the Oehlerites were too much oriented toward being an Opposition to the Trotskyists, centering their attention as a result on events in Europe and trying too little to get involved in problems and movements in the United States. The Stammites had small groups in Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, and one or two other cities.²⁰

In 1940 Stamm sought to bring together with his group some dissident Socialist Labor Party people as well as the Fieldites and others. When this move failed, his organization, known by then as the Revolt Group, went out of existence. An effort by Stamm and a handful of friends to negotiate conditions for reentry into the Revolutionary Workers League in 1946, in response to an "Open Letter to All Revolutionists" by the Oehlerites, failed.²¹

Another group to break away was a small element headed by George Marlen. They

formed the Leninist League in 1937 and continued to exist until the early 1950s. According to Marlen, it successively gave up allegiance to Trotsky, Lenin, and finally Marx, whom Marlen eventually came to regard as a "German Nationalist and anti-Semite."²² Max Shachtman concluded concerning the Marlenites that "one must be a blood relation of the immediate family, or at least related to it by marriage, in order to qualify for membership. This has the unfortunate effect of somewhat reducing the arena of recruitment, but it does guarantee against contamination."²³

Others who broke away from the Oehlerites to form small groups included Dave Atkins, who joined forces with a group of Italian-Americans who were followers of Amadeo Bordiga, and Karl Mienov, who maintained that the Spanish Civil War was an imperialist struggle on both sides. The Atkins group continued for some time after World War II.²⁴

The Turn Toward the Socialist Party

The culmination of Trotsky's French Turn insofar as the Trotskyists of the United States was concerned was their entry into the Socialist Party in mid-1936. This did not take place without considerable travail on both sides.

The Socialist Party had been experiencing increased convulsion and factionalism for about four years. The leadership which had been running the party since the split with the Communists in 1919-20 was challenged in the early 1930s by a group of younger men and women who differed with their elders on a number of issues.

The "Militants," as the young left wingers were called, were much more sympathetic to the Soviet Union than were the leaders of the Old Guard, who after the early 1920s had developed an unrelenting aversion to the USSR. Along with this more sympathetic view of the Soviet Union went a greater willingness on the part of the Mili-

tants to engage in some kinds of joint activities with the official Communists and the schismatic Communist groups, including the Trotskyites. Another issue between the two socialist groups concerned the trade union movement. The Militants were increasingly critical of the old-time socialist leaders in the garment trades and other unions, and at the same time were much more interested than the Old Guard in trying to gain influence among the many independent unions which arose outside the American Federation of Labor early in the New Deal. Finally, the Militants and the Old Guard differed fundamentally—although this did not become completely clear until after the Old Guard left the party—on the attitude to be assumed toward the New Deal. The Militants saw their party as the left-wing opposition to the New Deal, while the Old Guard increasingly sought to become the left wing of the New Deal.

The Militants tended to rally around Norman Thomas, the only new figure of national importance to appear in the Socialist Party in the wake of the Communist defections of the post-World War I period. Thomas was not basically concerned with the fine points of ideology and exegesis which the Militants raised against the Old Guard but he was interested in trying to orient the party toward the major problems of the U.S. economy, society, and politics, an effort which he saw as being hampered by the innate caution and sometimes entrenched interests of the Old Guard.

The conflict first reached national attention at the 1932 convention of the Socialist Party, at which Thomas and the Militants sought to displace Old Guard leader Morris Hillquit as national chairman. Although this effort failed, the Militant ranks grew rapidly thereafter—and an even further-left group, the Revolutionary Policy Committee (RPC), appeared. In the 1934 convention of the party a new Declaration of Principles, a confusing hodgepodge of revolutionary rhetoric and modifying reservations, was pushed through by the Militants and the RPC.

By late 1935 the conflict had come to the verge of split. Two rival organizations were established in New York City, the largest center of Socialist membership, and in the spring of 1936 there were actually primary elections within the Socialist Party (then a "legal" party in New York State) to choose delegates to the national convention—elections won by the Militants. Finally, at the Cleveland convention in June 1936 the Old Guard walked out to form its own organization, the Social Democratic Federation.

So long as serious efforts were being made to maintain the unity of the Socialist Party, the possibility of the Trotskyists being accepted in its midst was virtually nonexistent. Although a few individual dissident Communists—Herbert Zam and Ben Gitlow from the ranks of the Lovestoneites, and Albert Goldman, a Trotskyist—were accepted as members, mass entry of the Trotskyists was impossible. However, in the latter phases of the Militant-Old Guard struggle Norman Thomas developed the notion of the Socialist Party becoming an "all-inclusive" party. The exact meaning of this was unclear, but it certainly involved the idea of welcoming those who had broken with the official Communist movement and were willing to come into the Socialist Party to help build it into the major force in the left wing of U.S. politics.²⁵ Although Thomas had probably not thought in terms of merging with whole organizations such as the Workers Party, by the spring of 1936 he was willing to consider the idea, as were his Militant associates.

This radical new twist in the French Turn met some resistance within the Workers Party. Even after the exit of the Oehlerites, a group in the WP leadership strongly opposed entry into the Socialist Party. This was particularly true of A. J. Muste and others from the old American Workers Party. By the time of the merger of the AWP and the Communist League, Trotsky had already called for ending the French Turn in France, and the AWPers then expressed their opposition to any merger with the Socialist Party in the

United States. They wangled an agreement from the Trotskyists to concentrate efforts on building up the Workers Party as an alternative to both the Socialist and Communist parties, and that no move would be taken to liquidate the Workers Party into the *sp*. The Musteiters in the Workers Party were supported by an older Trotskyist element headed by Martin Abern and others.²⁶

Although there was considerable internal debate in the Workers Party, the faction favoring entry into the Socialist Party, led by Cannon and Shachtman, gradually gained ground. For one thing, Trotsky favored the step, although it is not clear that he "ordered" it. Shachtman insisted later that Trotsky approved the entry into the *sp* once it had occurred, but did not direct that his followers take the step.²⁷ On the other hand, Muste insisted that Abern had received a cable from Trotsky while the debate was still under way indicating that entry into the Socialist Party was in conformity with the international Trotskyist line.²⁸

It is clear that letters were exchanged by Cannon and Shachtman with Trotsky before the decision to enter the Socialist Party was taken. Cannon and Shachtman warned that without the Trotskyites being in their ranks after the split with the Old Guard, "there is not merely a potential, but a very real danger that the bulk of the leftward movement in the Socialist Party would be swallowed up, and consequently, vitiated and destroyed by Stalinists."²⁹

M. S. Venkataramani has paraphrased other arguments by Cannon and Shachtman in their correspondence with Trotsky: "Once inside the Socialist Party, Cannon and Shachtman asserted, the Trotskyists had nothing much to worry about. Their trained and resolute cadres were more than a match for the so-called militants. With the exit of the old guard, the *sp* bureaucracy would be weak and inexperienced. The Party's loose structure would enable the Trotskyists to maintain their own publications and thus carry on their propaganda without a break and, indeed, to a much larger audi-

ence. In many states and cities the *sp* was so inadequately organized that the Trotskyists would become *the* Socialist Party as far as those areas were concerned."³⁰

Trotsky finally sent a cable to Rose Karsner, Cannon's companion, on January 24, 1936: "Personally in favor of entry—Leo." He followed with detailed instructions to the American Trotskyist leaders, warning them to work cautiously once they were in the Socialist Party and to get very much involved in the *sp*'s organization and campaigns. He warned that "the greatest endurance, a calm, friendly tone is indispensable. Naturally, the tone can and will change when you already have the necessary points of support and when big political questions come upon the order of the day."³¹

A Workers Party convention in March 1936 finally decided in favor of entry into the Socialist ranks. Cannon later commented that "the minority, which was a very small minority by then, accepted the decision. There was nothing else they could do."³²

Meanwhile, negotiations had been under way between the Trotskyists and leaders of the Socialist Party. Herbert Zam, an ex-Lovestoneite who had entered the Socialist Party some time before, played a key role in establishing these contacts. He aided Cannon in arranging meetings with a number of Militant leaders, including Gus Tyler, Murray Baron, Andrew Biemiller, and Paul Porter.³³

Sidney Hook was the principal intermediary in arranging a meeting between the Trotskyist leaders and Norman Thomas. In his own discussions with Thomas, Hook apparently laid particular stress on the importance of a group of intellectuals in the Trotskyist periphery, including Louis Hacker, Charles Yale Harrison, Max Eastman, John Dos Passos, and Lionel Trilling, who would be attracted to the Socialist Party if it were to admit the Trotskyists.³⁴

In retrospect, Thomas was to admit that the most serious single political mistake he made as leader of the Socialist Party was to

support the admission of the Trotskyists to its ranks.³⁵ However, in the months before it happened, Thomas favored the move. In February 1936 he wrote Arthur McDowell, then state secretary of the Illinois Socialist Party: "As for the Workers' Party, I should like most of them in as individuals. I think they would strengthen us in Minneapolis, but we in New York are very much afraid of taking them as a group with their loyalty to Trotsky and to the Trotskyite organization, their genius for controversy and faction and their bitter opposition to other groups. If they'd come as individuals it would be another matter."³⁶ In June Thomas wrote a group of Pennsylvania Socialists that "if some former members of the Workers' Party will accept . . . the Socialist Declaration of Principles, the Socialist Platform, the Socialist Constitution, the Socialist discipline . . . honestly it seems to me in this crisis we have room for them. But I have warned our comrades in New York to be cautious and careful in their examination of each individual and in deciding whether or not to receive them into the Party."³⁷

Actual negotiations for entry of the Workers Party members into the *sp* were conducted between Cannon and Shachtman on one hand and Norman Thomas on the other. Details were then negotiated between the two Trotskyist leaders and Jack Altman, Herbert Zam and Gus Tyler for the Socialist Party.³⁸

These negotiations were all "informal" in the sense that, at least on the Socialist Party side, they were never officially authorized by the National Executive Committee or any other official body. Max Shachtman has suggested that the reason for this somewhat peculiar method of negotiation was the desire of the Socialists not to recognize the Workers Party as a group of equal status to the Socialist Party, and fear that a formal fusion of the two parties might alienate many Socialist members and sympathizers.³⁹

In any case, the Trotskyists had to pay a considerable price, at least temporarily, for

their admission. It was decided that the Workers Party would dissolve as a separate organization, that its periodicals, *The New Militant* and *New International*, would cease publication, and that the members of the Workers Party would be accepted "as individuals" into the various branches and locals of the Socialist Party. As a consequence, the last issue of *The New Militant* as the organ of the Workers Party was published in June 1936. It announced the *wp's* dissolution and the entry of its members into the Socialist Party and proclaimed, "We enter the Socialist Party as we are, with our ideas."⁴⁰

The Trotskyists in the Socialist Party

There is no doubt that the Trotskyists went into the Socialist Party in 1936 with the intention of capturing it if they could, or leaving it again with as many new recruits as possible. They certainly had no intention of really dissolving their organization in the Socialist ranks.

The Political Bureau of the Workers Party continued to meet in New York City each Monday night to plan the strategy within the Socialist Party.⁴¹ In the individual branches and locals of the *sp* the Trotskyites threw themselves energetically into Socialist activities. There was some disagreement among ex-members of the Workers Party as to just what their role should be within the *sp*. Some of them, like Albert Glotzer (who had at first opposed entry into the *sp*, felt that once inside Socialist ranks they should get as deeply involved as possible in day-to-day work rather than concentrating on factional activity. At one point Glotzer went to Mexico to confer with Trotsky on this issue. However, he found that although Trotsky was upset by the way his followers were behaving, his concern was the reverse of Glotzer's. He was afraid they were becoming so involved in the Socialist Party that they were in danger of losing their separate identity.⁴²

At the other extreme to Glotzer was A. J.

Muste, who like Glotzer had originally opposed entry into the Socialist Party. Muste continued to think it was a bad idea. In June 1936, when Trotsky was still living in Norway, Muste made a trip to Europe, where he spent a week with Trotsky. Trotsky tried unsuccessfully to convince Muste of the validity of the French Turn. Muste then went to Holland and Belgium where he conferred with Trotskyist leaders, and in July he attended an international Trotskyist meeting in Paris where breaking up the Socialist parties and taking their militants who would constitute the new revolutionary international were extensively discussed. This meeting completely alienated Muste from Trotskyism, and when he returned home he again became a Presbyterian minister and abandoned partisan political activity.⁴³

The Trotskyists were not entirely happy with the kind of reception they received from the Socialist Party leaders when they joined the SP. They felt they "weren't treated as equals," and they particularly resented not being invited to join the editorial boards of the *Socialist Call* and other party publications.⁴⁴

The Trotskyists had considerable success in winning control of local and state organizations of the Socialist Party. In Minnesota, where they had one of their principal centers of strength and the Socialists had only a small organization, the Trotskyists immediately took control of the SP in Minneapolis and in the state. In the 1936 election Vincent Dunne, the Trotskyist leader, was the only statewide Socialist Party candidate, running for secretary of state. The Minnesota Socialist platform proclaimed that the Socialists were not running a full slate against the Farmer Labor Party (FLP), but were running Dunne so that workers who voted for the FLP to keep out the Republicans and Democrats "can register their vote for the Socialist Party of Minnesota," and added that "only a revolutionary Socialist Party can in reality champion the immediate and ultimate needs of the toilers."⁴⁵

The Trotskyists also did well in Chicago,

where the Socialists were also weak in 1936. The ex-Workers Party people had a majority or close to it in the Socialist ranks once they joined them. For all practical purposes, the Trotskyist youth became the Young Peoples Socialist League in Chicago. Albert Glotzer and other Trotskyists were soon elected to the party's city committee.⁴⁶

Chicago was important to the Trotskyists for another reason. There Albert Goldman, a Trotskyist who had entered the Socialist Party shortly before the Workers Party was formed, had established a mimeographed bulletin, *Socialist Appeal*, which was an official publication of the Socialist Party of Illinois before entry of the Workers Party people. Cannon noted that "as soon as our party became oriented toward entry into the Socialist Party, we reestablished collaboration so effectively that when we gave up our press in response to the demand of the leaders of the Socialist Party, we already had an agreement with Goldman that the *Socialist Appeal* . . . would become an official organ of the Trotskyist faction."⁴⁷

Another center of major Trotskyist infiltration was California. The heads of the Socialist Party there, Glenn and Cary Trimble, were sympathetic to the Trotskyists, who were reinforced soon after they entered the SP by Cannon, who moved to California "for his health." By the end of 1936 the state Socialist Party had launched a weekly newspaper, *Labor Action*, with Cannon as editor. Several years later, Cannon wrote that "*Labor Action* was published under the auspices of the Socialist Party of California, but if it was not a Trotskyist agitational paper, I will never be able to make one. We tried our best to utilize it in that sense."⁴⁸

In February 1937 the Trotskyists openly reorganized as a faction of the Socialist Party. This action took place at a national Socialist Appeal Conference in Chicago. Cannon wrote that

Socialist Party members were invited from all parts of the country to come to Chicago to discuss ways and means of

advancing the interests of the party. Everybody was welcome regardless of his background or his factional alignment. The sole condition was that he agree with the program of the *Socialist Appeal*, which happened to coincide with the program of the Fourth International. . . . On that basis and in that form we constituted in Chicago in the early winter of 1937 what amounted in effect to a new nationwide Left Wing in the Socialist Party.⁴⁹

Frank Trager, the National Labor Secretary of the Socialist Party and a member of the Clarity Caucus faction, wrote Norman Thomas that some one hundred people were present at the Appeal Conference, about 25 percent of whom had not belonged to the Workers Party. Of the resolutions passed at the conference, Trager noted that "we would agree with very few of them."⁵⁰

Cannon argued that aside from gaining a substantial number of new members, the Trotskyists made three major gains by their passage through the Socialist Party. First, wide support for the Trotsky Defense Committee was mobilized to counter charges made against Trotsky during the Moscow Trials. As Cannon put it, "We were then in the most favorable situation as members of the Socialist Party—and, therefore, surrounded to a certain extent with the protective coloration of a half-way respectable party—and we couldn't be isolated as a small group of 'Trotskyists.' . . ."⁵¹ The *Socialist Call*, official organ of the Socialist Party, noted formation of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky in November 1936. It listed "among the membership" of the group Norman Thomas, John Dewey, Freda Kirchwey, Suzanne La Follette, Devere Allen, Edmund Wilson, Louis Adamic, Professor E. A. Ross, Joseph Wood Krutch, H. M. Kallen, James T. Farrell, Professor William H. Kilpatrick, Max Eastman, Sidney Hook, Inez Haynes Irwin, James Rorty, Professor Paul Brissenden, Vincent R. Dunne, John Chamberlain,

Benjamin Stolberg, and Louis Hacker.⁵² "Natives," as the Trotskyists called those who belonged to the Socialist Party before they joined it, helped extensively in this campaign. Norman Thomas spoke at one of its major meetings in Chicago, while Roy Burt, national secretary of the party, spoke along with Max Shachtman in New York City. The SP also published a pamphlet by Francis Heisler, a Trotskyist, on the issue.⁵³

Another advantage Cannon saw in Trotskyist membership was their ability to push their point of view on the Spanish Civil War. He wrote that "we fought to clarify the affairs taking place in Spain and to educate the cadres of the American party on the meaning of those events. Our entry into the Socialist Party facilitated this campaign, gave us an audience right at hand inside of what was then our own party."⁵⁴

Finally, membership in the Socialist Party helped the Trotskyists to establish contacts with the labor movement. Cannon noted that they were able particularly to establish contacts and a modicum of influence among the maritime workers of California, where they organized "the first nucleus of a Trotskyist fraction,"⁵⁵ and among the auto-workers, "where up to then, we had never had anything more than an occasional contact."⁵⁶

The Stalinists and the French Turn

The Stalinists commented extensively and vituperatively about the presence of the Trotskyists in the Socialist Party. They wept many crocodile tears, "warning" the Socialists of the dire consequences which would result from their association with people whom Earl Browder, in a speech in Madison Square Garden, called "the first line attack of fascism among the masses."⁵⁷

Typical of the line of attack of the official Communists during this period was an article by Clarence Hathaway entitled "Trotskyism in the United States," which appeared in *The Communist* in March 1937.

He wrote that "with Trotsky carrying on his poisonous propaganda freely from Mexico and giving guidance to his followers here, now firmly entrenched in the Socialist Party, much harm is being done to the Socialist Party itself and through it to the whole labor movement. Trotskyism has become a serious menace against which the whole labor movement, and in the first place, the Socialists must be alarmed." Hathaway also had some friendly advice for the Socialists: "Though most of the Socialist Party members are not Trotskyists and even opposed to Trotskyism, they are without inner organization for the defense of the party and without courageous leaders who will boldly take up the fight for socialism and against counter-revolution. The result has been disastrous for the party. The party has been thrown into a deep crisis that will be fatal unless the poisonous cancer of Trotskyism is cut clearly at the coming Socialist convention."

Furthermore, the *Daily Worker* editor claimed, the Socialist Party itself was being "infected" by Trotskyism. He claimed that "already one sees Norman Thomas and other leaders defending Trotskyism, excusing the assassins of Kirov, defending the confused allies of fascism, joining with Trotsky in attacking the Soviet Union." Hathaway professed to see even the nature of Thomas's 1936 presidential campaign, in which he had run as a left opponent of the New Deal when the Communists were in effect supporting Roosevelt, as a result of Trotskyist influence. "The narrow, sectarian policy foisted on the party during the election campaign, undoubtedly reflecting Trotskyist influence, resulted in discrediting the party among the broad masses of workers." With touching "solicitude" for the Socialists' dire fate, Hathaway noted once more "our advice when in the most comradely way we warned them against the Trotskyists," adding that "Trotskyism has nothing in common with Socialism and has no place in the Socialist ranks."⁵⁸ His peroration was typical of the

Stalinist diatribes against the Trotskyists: "The Trotskyists must be driven out! There is no room for scabs, splitters and assassins in the labor movement! The People's Front—the Farmer-Labor Party—uniting all workers and honest progressives, must be pushed forward with ever greater vigor as the weapon of the masses against reaction and its Trotskyist agents."⁵⁹

Growing Resistance to Trotskyists in the Socialist Party

The "natives" in the Socialist Party grew increasingly restive with the presence of the Trotskyists in their midst. However, it was about a year before they mobilized to take definitive action to get rid of the Russian leader's supporters.

After the defection of the Old Guard, the Militants split into two rival groups. The more moderate element continued to call itself the Militants, and was in control of the party in New York City. The other element, known as the Clarity Caucus or Zam-Tyler Caucus (after its leaders Herbert Zam and Gus Tyler), dominated the national party organization and was the only element confronting the Trotskyists in the Young Peoples Socialist League. Norman Thomas tended to be more closely associated with the Militants than with the Clarityites. The Militants and Clarityites differed for several months on the tactics to be used to confront the Trotskyists. The Militants were convinced much earlier than the Clarityites that it was necessary to get rid of Trotsky's followers, the Zam-Tyler Caucus tried longer to combat them through presenting an alternative left-wing program rather than by taking measures to exclude them from the party.

"Native" Socialist leaders in various parts of the country soon began to organize to seek the expulsion of the Trotskyists. Jack Altman, New York City leader of the Militants, Devere Allen, leader of the sp in Connecticut, and Paul Porter in Milwaukee

were among these. Allen and Porter established a Committee of Correspondence to organize the campaign.⁶⁰

Norman Thomas early became concerned with the impact of the Trotskyists on the Socialist Party. The evolution of his attitude reflects that of many of the "natives." In a memorandum he directed to Militant leaders Max Delson, Murray Gross, Murray Baron, Hal Siegel, and Jack Altman as early as August 1936, he asked, "How are we going to keep our very definite and constructive line and avoid a dangerous isolationism, such as that into which the Trotskyites fell and into which I fear they may lead us?" He expressed particular concern about the YPSL, saying, "They are giving the impression of being hard to get along with, and of being pure and simple Trotskyites. I don't want to exclude them as Trotskyites, but they ought not to exclude some of us who are not Trotskyites."⁶¹

By December 1936 Thomas was writing California secretary Glen Trimble about a leaflet on the Spanish Civil War published by that unit. "I meant to say that the tone of the leaflet was Trotskyist and was hurtful. . . . I know the immense harm that can be done . . . by public abuse, or what looks like public abuse, of the leaders in a cause that we must support."⁶² In January 1937 Thomas wrote David Lasser, Socialist head of the unemployed workers' organization, the Workers Alliance, of his opposition to those in the Socialist Party who "let the Communist Party make its decisions for it simply by opposing everything the Communist Party favors. This tendency, to some extent correctly, is attributed to Trotskyist elements in the Party."⁶³

By early February 1937 Thomas was asking Clarityite Lillian Symes for her opinion of the condition created by the Trotskyists in California and requested a confidential report on the matter.⁶⁴ About the same time he wrote Paul Porter in Wisconsin for his opinion of the way the Trotskyists were behaving in neighboring Minnesota.⁶⁵ In re-

sponse to Thomas's letter, Lillian Symes sent a warning. "You are being counted upon to maintain an 'all-inclusive' party in which the wrers can function as a unit, without national discipline, until they gain control. Then they will introduce 'democratic centralism' and crack down on you—and all other dissenters—without mercy. As Jim Cannon put it to us—"Hoan will save our necks for us. The National Office can't crack down on us without antagonizing Hoan. Give us another year in which to work freely and Thomas will be in an impossible position."⁶⁶ (Daniel Hoan was the Socialist mayor of Milwaukee.)

In a move to curb the factionalism threatening to tear the Socialist Party apart, the "natives" supported the calling of a special national convention in March 1937. Fearing that this might result in moves to expell them, the Trotskyists sought to head off this eventuality. Cannon later wrote that "we felt that we hadn't yet had time enough to educate and win over the maximum number of Socialist workers and Socialist youth who were capable of becoming revolutionists. We needed about six months more time. Therefore our strategy was to delay the showdown at this convention."⁶⁷

They sought a pre-convention meeting with Thomas and leaders of the Militant and Clarity factions. As a result, Cannon and Vincent Dunne of Minneapolis were appointed to speak for the Trotskyists, and they held a series of meetings in New York, including one at Thomas's home, with Thomas, Gus Tyler, Jack Altman, and Murray Baron. Cannon subsequently claimed that Thomas "solemnly agreed with us there that no proposal should be made at the convention to suppress internal organs—the *Socialist Appeal* in particular—or to expell anybody for his opinions—Norman Thomas made the agreement, but he didn't keep it."⁶⁸

The ex-Workers Party members were not eligible for election to the March 1937 convention since they had not been members

of the Socialist Party long enough. However, "natives" who belonged to the Socialist Appeal caucus had substantial representation. In the face of the move to ban factional publications (which in effect meant those of the Trotskyists), many of the delegates wanted immediately to split with the Socialist Party. However, the ex-Workers Party leaders convinced them not to do so at that time.⁶⁹

The March 1937 convention presented the Trotskyists with difficult decisions. Cannon wrote that "for the second time we were deprived of our press. We still hesitated to bring things to a head because in addition to our general unreadiness the work of the Trotsky Defense Committee was still uncompleted and we were afraid of jeopardizing it by a premature split."⁷⁰ There were extensive discussions within Trotskyist ranks. Both Cannon and Shachtman addressed a left wing caucus in New York where they stressed the slogan "Deeper into the SP." Shachtman was sanguine at that time about the Trotskyists' ability to take over the Socialist Party if they could stay in it some time longer.⁷¹

The Trotskyists continued to carry on their factional struggle even though deprived of their publications. Cannon described their tactics: "We worked out a system of multi-copied personal letters and branch resolutions. An ostensibly personal letter, evaluating the convention, was signed by one comrade and addressed to another. The letter was then mimeographed and discreetly distributed in the branches. Every time an issue arose . . . a resolution would be introduced in a New York branch by an individual comrade, then mimeographed and sent to our faction groups all over the country as a basis for their own resolutions on the question."⁷²

An issue which helped trigger the move to expel the Trotskyists arose in New York City. The majority of the "natives" there decided not to run a candidate against Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, who was running for

reelection in the 1937 election. At a city membership meeting where the issue was debated, Thomas argued in favor of this policy, while Shachtman was its principal opponent.

Soon after, Trotsky intervened, telling the American Trotskyists that he thought they had gotten everything from the Socialist Party that they could and that they should withdraw. They had begun to reach this conclusion themselves. Trotsky argued that they were bound by Socialist Party discipline so long as they stayed in the SP, and so were hampered in their propaganda activities, and therefore should get out.⁷³

One important factor which certainly influenced the thinking of both Trotsky and his U.S. followers was that the presence of the Trotskyists in the Socialist Party had largely served its purpose insofar as giving "protective covering" for the Trotsky Defense Committee was concerned. For seven days, beginning on April 10, 1937, the Commission of Inquiry headed by John Dewey held its sessions in Mexico City, taking Trotsky's testimony, and he and the American Trotskyist leaders were equally sure that the resulting Report of the Commission would vindicate Trotsky and declare him innocent of the charges made against him at the first Moscow Trial and in accompanying Stalinist propaganda.⁷⁴

In any case, by June Trotsky was urging his U.S. followers in the strongest terms to carry out a split in the Socialist Party. He wrote James Burnham, Cannon, Albert Glotzer, and Weber on June 15, 1937, that "The coincidence of all these factors promises to open an extremely favorable situation for our activity during the coming fall. It would be criminal to meet this new situation as prisoners of Thomas, Trager, Tyler and Co. So, we must again appear on the scene as an independent party. It seems to me here that the anniversary of the October revolution is the deadline for the establishment of our complete political independence."⁷⁵

Some of the Trotskyist leaders "thought that this new course recommended by Trotsky was wrong." They included Max Shachtman, James Burnham, and Arne Swabeck, who were all then in New York. Cannon, who was living and working in California, immediately accepted Trotsky's position. After negotiations between the two groups, it was agreed that they would be "oriented toward a split."⁷⁶

Formation of the Socialist Workers Party

Meanwhile, pressure for expelling the Trotskyists from the Socialist Party was mounting among the "natives." Upon returning from a two months' trip to Europe in July 1937, Norman Thomas reached the conclusion that the party had to get rid of the Trotskyists. He wrote a letter late that month to a number of people who had written him about the Trotskyist problem.

Trotskyism in the sense of supreme loyalty to a group or cause outside the Socialist Party is today our primary trouble; while we have it in the Party we cannot come effectively to grips with other problems. . . . I know that we shall not have a Socialist Party at all unless very soon we can find ways of ridding ourselves of those who use the Socialist Party for essentially Communist ends and whose real allegiance is outside the Party—to Stalin, to Trotsky, or to groups connected with them. . . . The issue is loyalty, and that we must have even at the cost of temporary reduction in our numbers.⁷⁷

Probably as a result of Trotsky's instructions the Trotskyists in the Socialist Party provoked their own expulsion. They began openly to circulate the Bulletin of the Fourth International preparatory group and to express their support for establishment of the Fourth International. In late July they held a "plenum" of the Appeal Tendency and reportedly "discussed methods, time and

procedure of disaffiliating from the Socialist Party." As a result, on July 26, 1937, the City Executive Committee of Local New York of the Socialist Party voted nine to two, with one abstention, to prefer charges "for carrying on an organized conspiracy to violate discipline of the Socialist Party" against the principal Appeal Tendency leaders in New York City, citing these and other actions against them.⁷⁸

On August 9, 1937, the City Central Committee of Local New York took action on these charges, expelling fifty-two leading members of the Appeal faction. The vote was forty-eight to two, with eighteen people not voting, and it was taken after four hours of discussion.⁷⁹ Those expelled included people who had entered from the Workers Party, including Shachtman, Martin Abern, James Burnham, Emmanuel Garret (Emmanuel Geltman), Felix Marrow, Ernest McKinney, George Novack, and John G. Wright. They also included a number of "native" Socialists, such as Alex Retzkin, Christian Neilson, and Hal Draper.⁸⁰

These expulsions were only the beginning of the exit of the Trotskyists from the Socialist Party. Shortly afterward, Cannon was reported to have told the National Executive Committee of the SP that "we got what we wanted out of joining the party for a while, our aims were accomplished, and now goodbye. We're going to take with us a lot of your folks."⁸¹

At the April 1938 National Convention of the Socialist Party the National Secretary reported that the state charters of the Socialist organizations of California, Indiana, Ohio, and Minnesota had been revoked to prevent the Trotskyists from taking them out of the party.⁸² Cannon claimed that by the time the purging of the Trotskyists was completed, the Trotskyist movement in the United States had more than twice as many members as it had before entering the Socialist Party.⁸³

Right after the expulsion, the Trotskyists began to issue *Socialist Appeal* in New York

U.S. Trotskyism: The Shachtmanite Split

as an eight-page tabloid weekly. Soon afterward they established a "National Committee of the Expelled Branches."⁶⁴ The Trotskyists also organized their version of a convention of the Socialist Party youth group, the Young People's Socialist League, in September 1937. Ernest Erber, who had been chairman of the YPSL when it was associated with the Socialist Party, was elected chairman of the Young People's Socialist League-Fourth International. Hal Draper, also a "native" socialist, was chosen as national secretary of the new YPSL. Some ex-Clarityite Yipsels, such as Irving Howe and Herman Benson, did not join the Trotskyists until shortly before the September convention of the YPSL.⁶⁵ Finally, the National Committee of Expelled Branches called a national convention to meet in Chicago on December 31, 1937-January 1, 1938. Cannon noted that the National Committee's work, in the meanwhile, had been done "under the closest cooperation and even under the supervision of Comrade Trotsky." He added that "in the midst of all his troubles, and the preparation of all his material on the Moscow trial, he had time to write us frequently and to show that he had a very close and sensitive understanding of our problem. He did everything he could to help us."⁶⁶

The founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party, in Chicago, put an end to the U.S. experiment with the French Turn. In retrospect, Cannon claimed that "Our 'round trip' through the Socialist Party had resulted in gains all along the line. We formed the Socialist Worker's Party in Chicago on New Year's Day and began once again an independent struggle with good prospects and good hopes."⁶⁷

The most serious split which U.S. Trotskyism had so far experienced began to develop in mid-1939 and reached its climax during and after the Socialist Workers Party special convention in April 1940. It gave rise to a schismatic Trotskyist group which was a major element in the U.S. far left for almost two decades and in attenuated form continued into the 1980s.

The split in the SWP which took place in 1939-40 involved, as leaders of the rival factions, the two men who had been the principal leaders of U.S. Trotskyism since the establishment of the movement, both of whom were major figures in the Fourth International: James P. Cannon and Max Shachtman. Their rivalry in this conflict had some roots in personality differences and disagreements dating from the start of the movement, but also involved theoretical and ideological differences which then constituted major issues in world Marxism-Leninism and continued to do so more than four decades later. The 1939-40 split was also of major significance in the history of International Trotskyism because it was marked by the last great controversy in which Trotsky was involved, he being a leading protagonist of one side in the conflict.

Background of the 1939-40 Split

From the establishment of the Communist League of America in 1928, Cannon had been the national secretary of the U.S. Trotskyist movement. Virtually from the beginning there had been unhappiness among other leaders about the way he conducted

the organization's business, and as early as 1929 an anti-Cannon faction was formed for the first time. No split evolved in the Trotskyist ranks at that time. However, in subsequent years Cannon and Shachtman tended to attract different kinds of supporters and associates and to do different kinds of work in the organization. The former was a good organizer and worked particularly well with working-class members and trade unionists that the Trotskyists were able to attract to their ranks. On the other hand, he had little capacity for theoretical discussion or disputation. Shachtman, in contrast, was the intellectual leader of the Trotskyist ranks until 1940. He was an expert at Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist theorizing and exegesis, a major asset in leadership of a radical organization in that period. He was a witty orator, with particular capacity to ridicule his or his organization's opponents. However, he also had the tendency to be long-winded. George Novack has recited a "witticism" which he says was prevalent in the 1930s: "Stalin expects to create socialism in one country, the Austro-Marxists in one city [Vienna], and Shachtman in one speech."¹ He tended to gather the party's intellectuals, particularly after the merger with the Mus-teites and the "raid" on the Socialist Party.

Trotsky had regard for both men, but for different reasons. He obviously respected Shachtman's ability as a theorist and writer, sufficiently to make him his literary executor. However, he clearly counted much more on the less imaginative and innovative Cannon to manage the organization of his American followers along the lines that he indicated were the correct ones.

Cannon described the different roles which he and Shachtman had before the split: "Shachtman and Burnham . . . did practically all the literary work. There was a division of labor between them and me, whereby I took care of the organizational and trade union direction, administration and finances—and all the rest of the chores that intellectuals don't like to bother with

as a rule—and they did the writing. . . ."² These differences were to play a significant role in the 1939-40 split.

The Russian Question

The basic controversy behind the split was the nature of the Soviet Union. Deriving from disagreements over that question were the immediate issues of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union," and the relevance of that "unconditional defense" posture to the party's attitude toward Soviet moves into Central Europe and Finland in late 1939.

What by 1939 had become the "traditional" or "orthodox" position of the Trotskyists was that of Trotsky himself. He had argued first that the rise of Stalin to power had represented a "Thermidorean reaction" within the Russian Revolution, the triumph of those opposed to further advances. Then he had come around to admitting that a "caste" of bureaucrats had seized power in the Soviet Union under Stalin and that it was therefore necessary to have a "political revolution" against the Stalinist regime.

At the same time Trotsky argued that the "social relations" of the Soviet regime remained sound. In *Problems of Development of the USSR* he wrote that "the character of the social regime is determined first of all by the property relations. The nationalization of land, of the means of industrial production and exchange, with the monopoly of foreign trade in the hands of the state, constitute the bases of the social order in the USSR. . . . By these property relations, lying at the basis of the class relations, is determined for us the nature of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state."³

Although this had been written in 1931, Trotsky had not fundamentally altered his position eight years later. The Soviet Union remained a "degenerated workers state" for him. He was absolutely unwilling to concede that the "bureaucratic caste" consti-

tuted a new ruling class in the Marxist sense of that phrase.

Disagreement with Trotsky's position was apparently first expressed within the United States Trotskyist ranks as early as 1937 by Joseph Friedman, who was better known by his party name, Joseph Carter, then one of the important but less publicized leaders of the SWP. Carter is described by Emanuel Geltman and Albert Glotzer as a person who could not make a public speech or write an article, even getting physically ill when he tried to do so, but who was a thinker and theorizer who was persuasive in personal conversation. He had considerable influence on some of the other Trotskyist leaders.⁴

Carter apparently first won over James Burnham and Emanuel Geltman to his point of view. Together, these three raised the issue officially within the party. They posed the question that if the USSR was no longer a workers' state, and was certainly not a capitalist one, it had to be something else, and they asked what that something else was.⁵

The idea that there had arisen in the Soviet Union a new ruling class was not an entirely novel one at that time. An Italian ex-Communist and ex-Trotskyist who went under the name Bruno R. (Bruno Rizzi)⁶ had put forth this notion in a pamphlet which was circulating at about this time. Emanuel Geltman insists that although the SWP leaders were aware of the existence of this pamphlet, none of the three who first raised the issue in the party had read it, and he is sure that Joseph Carter did not get the idea from the Bruno R. document.⁷ However, he has suggested that perhaps Carter had gotten the kernel for the idea from one of the writings of Rudolph Hilferding.⁸

Carter and his associates adopted the name "bureaucratic collectivism" for the Soviet regime as it had evolved under Stalin and insisted that it was neither capitalism nor the socialism foreseen by Marx and even by Lenin. During the Founding Conference

of the Fourth International, to which both Shachtman and Geltman were delegates, Geltman tried to convince Shachtman of the validity of the notion. Shachtman refused to be convinced at that time. In fact, he opposed the bureaucratic collectivist idea very strongly, as was his wont when he was against any idea or group. Indeed, according to Geltman, the vehemence of Shachtman's opposition was strongest just before he was finally convinced of the validity of the bureaucratic collectivism argument.⁹

Thirty years later Shachtman told the author what line of thought brought him finally to side with Carter, Burnham, and Geltman on the issue of bureaucratic collectivism. In considering the Trotskyist position of "unconditional support" of the Soviet Union, the thought came to him that if Soviet expansionism were to encompass Mexico, the Stalinists would certainly kill Trotsky and all of his followers in that country. It then struck him also that if the United States should ever fall under Stalinist control, he too would be among the earliest people to be shot as a result of the Soviet policies to which he had been offering "unconditional support." This idea brought him up short and began to make him question not only the "unconditional support" position, but the nature of the Soviet regime itself, and the absurdity of Trotskyist backing for a regime which, wherever its influence expanded, would have the murder of Trotskyists as one of its first orders of business.¹⁰

The Beginnings of the Schism

However, by the time the split in the SWP began to develop, the principal leaders of the group which was ultimately to break with the party were convinced that the Soviet Union could no longer be considered a "workers' state," degenerate or otherwise; but this was not the ostensible issue over which the factional battle took place. Rather, it was whether the SWP should con-

tinue to follow Trotsky in pledging "unconditional support" to the USSR in any and all conflicts with foreign powers.

Ernest Erber sketched the issues which were openly debated in the 1939-40 struggle. He wrote that "the Minority took the position that Russia was engaging in an imperialist war which the bureaucracy had entered on behalf of its 'prestige, power and revenues' and that revolutionists could not be defensists in such a war. . . . Though an increasing number of Minority supporters felt less sure about the validity of the 'workers state' designation (or openly stated that they no longer adhered to it as did Comrade Johnson), the faction as a whole chose to lay aside the theoretical question temporarily and make the issue the question of 'defensism' or 'defeatism' in relation to Russia's participation in the war in Poland and Finland. This view was shared by Burnham and Carter who decided to refrain from raising their views on the class nature of Russia and join in a bloc with the Minority on the political question."¹¹

The struggle between the two factions began even before the outbreak of World War II. At the SWP's July 1939 convention clashes occurred on both theoretical and organizational issues. Constance Ashton Myers has noted that "Shachtman and C. L. R. James addressed international matters—the political question of the party's position on Stalin's demand for the right to 'guarantee' Poland and the Baltic states against German attack. They also wanted the party to take a stand on any possible pacts (predicted by Trotsky) between Hitler and Stalin and on the war." She added, "the delegates did not tackle those thorny problems."¹²

The disagreements in the realm of ideas led to factionalism when it came time to elect a new leadership. One of the minority faction documents issued during the ensuing fight noted that "at the July 1939 convention, two lists were presented, Shachtman's for one group of comrades, and Dunne's for the Cannon faction." The mi-

nority claimed somewhat disingenuously for the Shachtman list that "there being no important or visible political differences in the party, the slate did not aim at any faction majority. Dunne's slate aimed first and foremost at a majority for the Cannon clique. . . ."

After the signing of the Stalin-Nazi Pact and outbreak of World War II, the struggle within the Socialist Workers Party was intensified. At a meeting of the Political Committee after the Soviet invasion of Poland, three resolutions on the situation were offered. Mario Pedrosa (Lebrun) noted that "the great majority of the party leadership found itself confronted with this unhappy alternative: either condemn the invasion, abandoning the slogan of unconditional defense, or keep the slogan and approve of the invasion. On this very question the great majority of the leading comrades could only display their vacillations between the two opposing positions: defensist or defeatist."

One of the resolutions presented at this meeting was "the really courageous resolution" of Albert Goldman, "asking the party to approve the invasion by Stalin." Pedrosa noted that "it received only his own vote, if we do not count one abstention as timid approval." On the other hand, "The Burnham resolution, condemning the invasion of Poland by the Red Army as a participation in a war of imperialist conquest, got only three votes. . . ." Finally, "The resolution receiving the majority of the votes prudently avoided answering the question; it was edited so cautiously that it did not even dare to speak of an 'invasion,' preferring a long paraphrase such as 'the participation of Russia in the war in Poland.'"¹⁴

This meeting of the Political Committee was followed by an extended controversy over the party's attitude toward the Soviet Union's role in the war, which did not end until the split in the party in April 1940. During this struggle the majority of the top leadership sided with Cannon and Trotsky, and in interparty documents were usually referred to therefore as the Majority; while

those associated with Shachtman, Abern, and Burnham were the Minority.

Many years later, Shachtman commented on the Minority position: "Our own point of view was far from being as strong or as consistent, at least in my opinion, as it later became. It was shot through with many inconsistencies and many weaknesses—we were thinking on the run, so to speak. . . . We felt then, even with those weaknesses and deficiencies, as I feel now, that we were on the right track, and Trotsky was on the wrong track."¹⁵

Each of the three opposition leaders had his own position on the nature of the Soviet Union, according to Shachtman. Burnham had been convinced for at least a year that the USSR was no longer a workers' state. Abern still felt that it was a degenerated workers' state, "But that in this war, it was following an imperialist policy, and should not be defended."¹⁶ As for Shachtman, "I occupied the notorious 'doubtist' position—when I was pressed to say, I would say very frankly 'I am in doubt, I am no longer as sure as I was before that it is a workers state. I am not ready, however, to say that it is no longer a workers state, it is some other kind of state.' That does not speak too highly of the clarity that I had at the time of this important question, but it speaks very accurately about my state of mind on the question."¹⁷

The next open confrontation was at a plenum in October 1939. There the issue was debated, and Burnham proposed a referendum on the issue among members of the SWP. The Cannonite majority turned down this suggestion, and in doing so had Trotsky's support.¹⁸

The Role of Trotsky in the Struggle

The controversy leading to the 1940 split among his U.S. followers was Trotsky's last great struggle. Shachtman, Burnham, Abern and their followers were questioning some of the most important teachings of their

master and were directly challenging Trotsky's policies toward World War II. After some apparent hesitation, Trotsky threw himself energetically into the conflict in support of Cannon and those associated with him. In organizational terms, Cannon and his closest associates carried the battle against the dissidents. However, in terms of theory and ideology it was Trotsky who bore the brunt of the struggle.

Cannon was obviously anxious to have Trotsky intervene as much as possible. He wrote Joseph Hansen (who was then in Mexico with Trotsky) and Trotsky on November 4, 1939:

I could very well be satisfied with an attitude of aloofness or a very restrained and limited intervention on your part in an ordinary dispute. But it is becoming clearer every day that we are concerned now with a fundamental struggle for the program and the general ideology of our movement, not simply for the victory of the Bolshevik doctrine on this or that point, but for the supremacy of the system and method of Bolshevik politics and organization. . . . In view of the fact that under the conditions of the war our discussion on the Russian question becomes in essence the discussion of the Fourth International, we think international participation in the drafting of the Russian resolution is decidedly in order.¹⁹

On December 14, 1939, Cannon wrote Hansen that "on the face of things now we appear to be ensured of a small majority at the convention. A few shifts or surprises could change the situation in the other direction. . . . I am very glad indeed to hear that Crux is writing another article on the most fundamental aspects of the present dispute. A really positive intervention on his part, which will present things as they really are, is perhaps the only thing now that can save for the Fourth International those who are worth saving."²⁰ ("Crux" was one of Trotsky's pseudonyms.)

When Trotsky finally did decide to fully intervene, he came to bear the great brunt of the polemical struggle for the Majority. According to Max Shachtman,

We would write our polemical articles—Burnham myself, others—defending our point of view against the majority leadership—Cannon, Goldman and their friends. But we would never, or almost never, be answered by them. The answers always came from Trotsky. It wasn't that he was our outstanding opponent. He was our opponent, period. . . . There's no question in my mind that Trotsky felt that this dispute was more vital, more serious for the future of the Trotskyist movement than any of the disputes that had gone before in the Trotskyist movement—and so he launched a veritable bombardment against us, a polemical bombardment.²¹

Shachtman added that Trotsky sent his polemic to all SWP branches. Shachtman noted that "it was not very flattering to the leadership of the American Trotskyist movement."²²

Subsequently, Trotsky's interventions were brought together as a book, *In Defense of Marxism*. That volume, consisting of articles as well as letters to various participants in the controversy, became one of his most widely quoted works in later years.²³

Cannon's contributions to the polemics were published as *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*. That volume, which also contains both polemical articles and some of Cannon's letters to his supporters and to Trotsky, also was widely cited by the Cannonites.²⁴

Issues

Unconditional Defense of the Soviet Union

Max Shachtman defined clearly the position of the Minority on the "unconditional defense" issue, insofar as it applied to Soviet

behavior during the first months of World War II, in an "Open Letter" to Trotsky dated January 1, 1940. He started this discussion by noting that "we *advocated* and urged support of a war to defend the Soviet Union from imperialist attack. In that case, we did not insist upon democratic formalities or even democratic realities as a condition for our defense. We said—the Minority continues to say it—that if the imperialists assail the Soviet Union with the aim of crushing the last conquest of the October Revolution and reducing Russia to a bunch of colonies, we will support the Soviet Union unconditionally." Shachtman adds, "That would be a progressive war, even under Stalin's command and despite Stalin's command. We would fight for a democratic All-Soviet Congress to take over the helm, but we would not demand it as a preliminary condition for our support."²⁵

However, Shachtman argued, these considerations were not relevant to the Soviet behavior at the onset of the war.

We did *not* advocate the invasion of Poland or the Baltic countries or Finland. We did not consider such actions necessary for the defense of the Soviet Union, conceived in a revolutionary-internationalist sense. On the contrary, we condemned the invasions; you even called the invasion of Poland "criminal and shameful." To this day, I do not understand by what right of formal or dialectic logic we should, in the light of this, call upon the workers to give material and military support to the invasion, which has as its clear-cut objective that very annexation which we condemn and oppose.²⁶

With regard to the specific case of the Finnish invasion, Shachtman commented:

According to the resolution on Finland of the Cannon faction (which you support), the Fourth International tells the Russian workers not only to be Soviet patriots in

general, but to give material and military support to Stalin's army in Stalin's war (what attitude the Finnish proletariat should take toward the Red Army our fearless "unconditional defensists" do not indicate by a single syllable). On what conceivable basis can we advocate such a policy to the Russian working class? How can we defend it before the American working class, or even its vanguard elements?²⁷

Shachtman refuted the claims of the Cannon faction and Trotsky concerning the "progressive" nature of the Soviet incursion into Finland. He commented,

I find even less for your—how shall I put it?—astonishing remarks about Finland. You say that we do not "mention by so much as a word that the Red Army in Finland appropriates large landowners and introduces workers' control while preparing for the expropriation of the capitalists." . . . True, not by so much as a word. Why? Because the first anyone has heard in our party—*anyone!*—of the expropriation of the large landowners and the introduction of workers' control in Finland by the Red Army, is in your article. Where is this taking place? On what reports do you base yourself? There is no trace of workers' control in the Soviet Union today; there is even less than that in Finland. That at least so far as my knowledge goes, and on this point I have questioned unavailingly many Cannonites.²⁸

Shachtman went on to question Trotsky's claim that a "civil war" had broken out in Finland:

Where is the civil war in Finland which is "evidently already beginning?" Unless you refer to the government of the idiotic scoundrel Kuusinen, we have not yet seen the first traces of that civil war—regardless of how much we should like to see it, no matter how anxious we are to de-

velop a policy that will promote it, no matter how firmly we count upon its eventual materialization. Do you deduce this "civil war" from an abstract and false theoretical estimation of the role of the Kremlin bureaucracy, or is there some objective evidence that this "concrete process is taking place in Finland"?²⁹

Shachtman best summed up his group's position on the "unconditional defense" issue as it applied to the first months of the war in the following passage:

Let me accept, then, your characterization of our traditional position. We have never defended, not even conditionally, Stalin's international policy; we give no unconditional support to the Kremlin's diplomatic and military activities. Our policy is not determined by the Kremlin's deeds and crimes. Good! . . . Concretely, for example, we did not support the Kremlin's policy towards bourgeois Finland (or Poland etc.) But what is war? War is the continuation of politics by other means. Then why should we support the war which is the continuation of the international policy which we *did not* and *do not* support? The Fourth International also told the Russian proletariat not to support the Kremlin's foreign policy. Then why should we now tell the Soviet workers to support a war which is the continuation of that policy?³⁰

The "Petty Bourgeois" Issue

Trotsky and the Cannonites insisted that the split within the swp was along class lines, that the "genuine proletarians" were with Cannon and the Majority, and that the Minority was led by and consisted of "petty bourgeois" elements in the party. The Minority in the Political Committee issued a detailed reply to this charge early in March 1940. They sought to rebut the "petty bourgeois" charge on both a factual and theoretical basis. On the question of fact, whether

most workers in the party supported the Majority, the Minority statement commented that "the triumphant reference of the Cannonites to the fact that the Minneapolis branch, for example, supports the Majority—with such remarkable unanimity, too—does not decide for a minute the correctness or incorrectness of their political position. There is no smaller number of proletarian militants in other sections of the party who support the standpoint of the Minority."³¹ In response to Trotsky's claim that the Minority had assumed a "petty bourgeois" position ever since the establishment of the SWP, the Political Committee Minority, after discussing the specific issues cited by Trotsky to prove this point, commented that "what it was necessary to prove was that the Minority, on a series of political questions in the past, took or tended to take a petty-bourgeois position on those questions as against the Cannonites, who took or tended to take the Marxist position. Even if Trotsky is granted all his points, they would at best show that on the whole the position of both the Majority and the Minority was the same in the eleven cases he mentions. The distinction between the two groups first occurs clearly on the Russian question. It is therefore necessary to demonstrate how, on this question, the position of the Minority is petty bourgeois. But this is no easy matter. At least, it has not yet been done and, in our opinion, it cannot be done."³²

Trotsky was probably correct in arguing that most of the working-class elements in the SWP supported him and Cannon. However, what was clearly true was that the overwhelming majority of the members of the Young People's Socialist League-Fourth International sided with the Minority. Many years later Ernest Erber, who had been chairman of the YPSL when it was the youth group of the Socialist Party and continued to hold that post in the youth group of the SWP, noted that the young people were repelled by what they saw as the extreme dog-

matism of the Cannonites. He concluded that the youth leaders didn't have a "Bolshevik mentality."³³

Trotsky and Burnham

Trotsky centered a considerable amount of his rhetoric in this dispute on James Burnham. He made much of the fact that Burnham was a professor, and attacked him especially because Burnham did not believe in the dialectic and dialectical materialism in particular. Trotsky argued that Burnham's occupation and his "fundamental" disagreements with Marxism made Burnham a "petty bourgeois," and explained the "petty bourgeois" position which he had taken on the nature of the Soviet Union and the question of "unconditional defense" of the USSR.

Trotsky sent a twenty-two page "Open Letter to James Burnham," which dealt particularly with Burnham's open rejection of dialectical materialism as a necessary basis for revolutionary politics. Trotsky cited at considerable length the adherence of "true" revolutionary leaders to Marxist dialectical materialism, and associated the shortcomings of such people as Edward Bernstein and Karl Kautsky with their rejection of or lack of concern with that philosophy. He then attributed the "errors" of the SWP opposition on the question of unconditional support to the USSR to their lack of belief in dialectical materialism. Trotsky concluded that the coming SWP convention "in my opinion must declare categorically that in their attempts to divorce sociology from dialectic materialism and politics from sociology, the leaders of the opposition have broken from Marxism and become the transmitting mechanism for petty-bourgeois empiricism."³⁴

Burnham wrote a long reply to Trotsky which he entitled "Science and Style," and in which he excoriated Trotsky. He accused Trotsky of dragging in the issue of dialectical materialism as a "red herring." He then

commented that "I can understand, and even sympathize with your recourse to dialectics in the current dispute. There is little else for you to write about, with every appeal you make to actual events refuted the day after you make it."³⁵ In defense of his own philosophical position, Burnham started by saying that "I regard you as one of the most competent historians and political scientists in the world. . . . But your qualifications in these fields do not automatically assure your competence also in the fields of philosophy, logic, natural science and scientific method." He added that most of what Engels said "in these latter fields" he found "confused or outmoded by subsequent scientific investigation," and that "You . . . serve up to us only a stale rehash of Engels."³⁶ . . . In all the elaborated confusion of your new remarks on dialectics, you make only one attempt at an *argument* in favor of dialectics, and this argument, upon examination, turns out to be both irrelevant and *reactionary*." Trotsky's argument is that "all the great and outstanding revolutionists . . . stood on the ground of dialectic materialism," but Burnham asks, "Is this weapon not identical in form with the weapon *in extremis* of all reaction: do you dare to disbelieve when our fathers believed, and their fathers and fore-fathers before them?"³⁷

Burnham argued that belief in dialectical materialism was not "fundamental" to the struggle then going on in the SWP. He maintained that "there are no fundamental questions 'in general' . . . Within each systematized field of knowledge there are certain principles which can be regarded, from the point of view of that field, as fundamental. . . . The only fundamentals relevant to our present dispute are the fundamentals of *politics*—presumably we are not banded together as a society of mathematicians or a school of art." He added, "The fundamentals of politics are constituted by: the central *aim*, together with the most important means which are regarded as necessary in achieving that aim."³⁸

Burnham accused Trotsky of having "absorbed too much of Hegel, of his monolithic, his totalitarian, vision of a block universe in which every part is related to every other part, in which everything is relevant to everything else, where the destruction of a single grain of dust means the annihilation of the Whole."³⁹ Later, he repeated this thought, saying that "again you proceed from a *totalitarian* conception, which relates everything to everything, with iron bonds."⁴⁰

As to the specific political issue under discussion, Burnham held that "Trotsky-Cannon propose the *strategy of defense of the Stalinist bureaucracy as the lesser evil*. It doesn't make any difference what Trotsky-Cannon *say* about their policies, this is what it comes down to in practice. . . . The opposition . . . proposes the *strategy of the third camp*." He added that "this conflict of strategical orientations is the central political issue, and nothing else."⁴¹

Burnham accused Trotsky of undermining his whole movement. He said, "Comrade Trotsky, in the course of your intervention in the present dispute, you have struck such heavy blows against the Fourth International that, for my own part, I am not convinced that the International will be able to survive them. . . . The truth can only destroy a false doctrine, and therefore you are compelled to evade the truth, and to hide it."⁴²

Finally, Burnham attacked some of the innuendoes used by Trotsky. He commented that "you sin more grievously than you even understand, Comrade Trotsky. In a cheap manner you twice grimace at Shachtman for trying to 'conduct the revolution' from 'the Bronx.' Not merely are you here appealing to a usual reactionary provincialism, directed against the metropolis. Do you know what *further* meaning 'the Bronx' has in this country, Comrade Trotsky? Do you know that to nearly every American it means not only a New Yorker, but a *few*? And are you so naive as to think that our

party—yes, even our party—is altogether immune to influence from such an association? The weapons you are now using have a fearful habit of back-firing.”⁴³

It is doubtful that Leon Trotsky was ever attacked more vigorously or more biting by anyone from within his own ranks than by Burnham in this document.

The Issue of a Split

Although Trotsky and Cannon were united in their opposition to the positions of the Minority, there seems to have been some disagreement between them concerning the inevitability or desirability of a split in the SWP as a result of the controversy. As late as February 20, 1940, Trotsky wrote to the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International that “in view of the exceptional situation created by the sharp fight and profound divergencies, the future minority can ask for certain reasonable guarantees in order to prevent a premature and not unavoidable split.”⁴⁴ Two months earlier Trotsky had invited Shachtman to come to Mexico to discuss the issues in dispute, apparently with the hope that some meeting of minds might be possible. However, Shachtman turned down the invitation.⁴⁵

Cannon did not share Trotsky’s desire to maintain party unity. According to the Minority, “long before the Cleveland Conference of the Opposition, Cannon, in the presence of Lewit, Lebrun (of the I.E.C.) and Shachtman, proposed to the last named a ‘cold split’ with a division of the ‘property.’ When this was reported to the membership meeting in New York, also months ago, and at the last City Convention, Cannon did not even attempt to deny the truth of the report. Indeed, in his reply, he implicitly confirmed it.”⁴⁶

On March 8, more than a month before the SWP convention, Cannon sent a circular letter to “All Majority Groups” in which he wrote,

In the meantime the most important thing is to make all necessary organizational preparations for the inevitable split. See that all membership lists, lists of sympathizers, contacts, and so forth are in safe hands. Have all supporters of the majority prepared for resolute action the moment the split becomes a formal reality. It is important to impress upon any comrades playing with the idea of a split that it can only mean the beginning of a merciless war with us. Some of them undoubtedly are playing with the idea that they can split the party and still maintain some kind of friendly and comradely relations with us. It must be made clear to them that friendship ceases when the party is attacked.⁴⁷

Cannon and his colleagues in the national headquarters took steps to carry out his own instructions. Many years later Stanley Plastrick remembered that some weeks before the April convention he, as manager of the party’s newspaper, was shocked one day when he went to cash a check for the paper at the bank and was told that the money in that account had been changed to another account without his being notified. Plastrick told Shachtman about this, and they agreed this meant that Cannon was taking all of the party’s funds into the hands of his faction and that this meant he was going to force a split in the party.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, Cannon carried on a violent polemic against the opposition. Although Trotsky, as we have seen, made certain personal attacks on the opposition leaders, Cannon was even more strident in this regard. He was particularly strong in his onslaught against Martin Abern who, together with Shachtman and Burnham, was one of the three principal opposition leaders.

Among other attacks on Abern was a document “Abernism: The Case History of a Disease.” In it Cannon claimed that “the Abern group is a permanent family clique whose uninterrupted existence and perfidi-

ous practices are known to all the older members of the party. For more than ten years it has waged a now open, now concealed, but never interrupted factional struggle against the party leadership." He stated that "Abernism is abhorred by the basic cadres of the party" and that "since the very beginning of the present factional struggle Shachtman and Burnham have suffered from the most embarrassing contradiction, as a result of their combination with Abern."⁴⁹

The Factional Struggle

The struggle for control of the SWP was waged over many months. Constance Ashton Myers has described the process: "Vigorous campaigning was begun. Cannon boasted that in February alone he had made forty-three speeches, and a total of sixty by April. He debated Shachtman again and again in meetings. . . . By February 20, the mimeograph machine had churned out eleven special *Internal Bulletins* and would print four more by April 5, the opening date of the convention."

The conflict spread. Myers has noted that "to win the California locals the national committee launched Murray Weiss on a western tour. C. I. R. James left New York for Los Angeles (without official authorization) to present the minority viewpoint to western comrades. Shachtman toured the Midwest. All the while heated letters-to-branches poured from Cannon's pen."⁵⁰

Cannon, writing after the April 1940 convention, described the factional fight in glowing terms:

The decision of the party came at the end of a thoroughgoing democratic party discussion which left not a single question unclarified. The discussion was formally opened early in October and continued uninterrupted for six months. It is highly doubtful that any party discussion anywhere was ever so extensive, so com-

plete, and so democratically conducted as this one. Thirteen big internal bulletins were published by the National Committee during the discussion, with the space about equally divided between the factions; and there was an unrestricted distribution of factional documents, besides those published in the official bulletins. In addition, there were innumerable debates and speeches in party membership meetings. Such an extensive and drawn-out discussion may appear to be abnormal, even for a democratic organization such as ours which settles all disputed questions by free and democratic discussion. So it was.⁵¹

The 1940 Convention

The controversy came to a climax at the April 1940 convention. Subsequently, both sides agreed that the split among the delegates was approximately 60 percent for the Cannon group and 40 percent for the opposition. They disagreed about the significance of the division, the Cannonites stressing the "proletarian" background of their delegates, the opposition claiming that since they also had 70 percent of the YPSL they represented "a majority of the 4th International movement in the United States."⁵²

Three major subjects were on the agenda. One, a discussion of the trade union activities of the party, was "non-controversial" in terms of its subject matter, but had factional overtones. Subsequently, Cannon argued that "the opposition . . . was greatly compromised and discredited by the fact that it virtually abstained from participation in this extensive discussion. They had nothing to say and nothing to report."⁵³ The dissidents, on the other hand, claimed that this trade union subject "was transformed into a lengthy filibuster lasting one whole day. This was intended to impress the Minority that it was 'breaking with the proletarian section of the party. . . . This 'demonstra-

tion' against the minority fell of its own weight."⁵⁴

The two subjects of bitter debate were those over the role of the USSR in World War II and over organizational questions. The Majority won decisively on both of these, with a substantial minority opposing them.

The Minority presented a proposed resolution, "The Second World War and the Soviet Union," which proclaimed the war to be "a new struggle among the great powers for a re-division of the earth. . . ." It argued that from this "there follows the strategy which revolutionary socialists are obligated to adopt with respect to it. . . . THE STRATEGY OF THE THIRD CAMP." This draft resolution proclaimed that "the Soviet Union is participating integrally in the world imperialist war for the re-division of the earth. . . . The reactionary character of its participation is demonstrated equally by: the policy and aims of the Soviet government and army—bureaucratic expansionism—which in no way advance or defend the interests of the Russian or the world proletariat. . . ." It followed, therefore, that "revolutionary socialists are obligated. . . to revise the former conception of 'unconditional defense of the Soviet Union.' . . ."⁵⁵ This Minority resolution seems not to have been debated.⁵⁶

The organizational question centered on the Minority's insistence, in a "Resolution on Party Unity," that "the party must extend to whichever group is the minority at the convention the right to publish a public political journal of its own, defending the general program of the Fourth International and at the same time presenting in an objective manner the special position of its tendency on the disputed Russian question."⁵⁷ The Cannonites rejected this, passing a resolution which repudiated "the attempt of the petty-bourgeois minority to impose its will" on the issue, and threatened expulsion of anyone who should try to publish such a journal. They also passed a resolution offering the Minority representation on party

committees and publications, but declared the discussion "closed."⁵⁸

It was these resolutions on organizational matters which made a split in the party inevitable. They assured that the Minority could no longer continue publicly to advocate their points of view within the party, leaving them with the choice of giving up their positions on the issues involved—which they had no intention of doing—or advocating them from outside of the swp.

The Workers Party

Formation of the Workers Party

The Minority did not immediately withdraw from the Socialist Workers Party. Rather, they waited to be thrown out. Action against them was not long in coming. At the Political Committee meeting on April 16, less than ten days after the convention, the Minority members of the committee were "suspended" from membership. They and their followers were given until September to announce their full acceptance of the decisions of the April convention, after which, if they had not done so, they would be considered separated from the swp. At a subsequent plenum, the oppositionists were formally expelled from the party.⁵⁹

The dissidents soon established their own organization, the Workers Party. They began publishing a weekly newspaper, *Labor Action*, which proclaimed on its banner that the new party was an affiliate of the Fourth International, although the FI never gave it such a standing.

The new Workers Party carried out a minor coup against its former comrades. Shachtman and Burnham had both been among the editors of *New International*, the "theoretical" organ of the swp. They proceeded to bring out a new issue of *New International*, but now as the theoretical organ of the Workers Party. Rather than seeking a legal remedy against the dissidents the swp began to issue a new periodical, *Fourth In-*

ternational, the first issue of which came out in May 1940.⁶⁰

Constance Ashton Myers said that in this division, "The Socialist Workers Party split 'right down the middle, fifty-fifty,' the former minority faction having 40 percent of the membership, including prominent intellectuals and 80 percent of the Young People's Socialist League." She said that the swp before the split had had a membership of "around 800 to 1,000."⁶¹ The new party thus began with a membership which was probably something less than 500. In such divisions, there is always a certain proportion of members who drop out entirely, not affiliating with either group.

Early Workers Party Defections

Within a few months the Workers Party lost two of its most distinguished intellectual figures, Burnham and Dwight Macdonald. It was to lose a significant group of others some years later.

James Burnham had been one of the three leading figures in the swp Minority, and a founding member of the Workers Party. However, his possible abandonment of Trotskyism was perhaps presaged in his polemic exchange with Trotsky when he expressed his doubts as to whether the Fourth International could ever "recover" from the blows which he conceived Trotsky as having dealt it in the process of the swp factional fight. Burnham had in any case a somewhat peculiar position in the Trotskyist leadership. Shachtman later described him as belonging to the "bourgeois aristocracy," and as being "very scholarly—in knowledge."⁶² Shachtman noted that Burnham had learned but did not use Trotskyist jargon and had learned Trotsky's ideas rapidly after joining the movement with the awp. Burnham sought to orient the swp toward "American political questions."⁶³ Shachtman concluded that "all of us . . . felt that although he was with us and with us thoroughly, he wasn't, so to say, of us."⁶⁴

Within a few weeks of the split, Burnham

abandoned the Trotskyist ranks completely, resigning from the Workers Party. A year or so later he published what is probably his best-known book, *The Managerial Revolution*, which, although not abandoning Marxist reasoning completely, was certainly too heretical even for the Workers Party. It argued that a new ruling class had not only evolved in the Soviet Union, as he had maintained in the swp internal fight, but that new ruling classes had emerged in Nazi Germany and in the United States. Even more heterodox was his argument that in all three cases the new ruling group was the same, the "managerial class," which was thrust into its position by the size and complexity of modern industrial societies, which put those with "managerial" skills in a position to dominate those societies and economies.⁶⁵

Subsequently, Burnham moved even further from Trotskyism. He became one of the leading lights on *The National Review*, the most important right-wing "journal of opinion" in the United States, founded by William Buckley in the 1950s. He also became a witness in favor of the government in the suit of his former colleagues of the Workers Party to get off the infamous "Attorney General's List." With the departure of Burnham, the Workers Party people came to be known almost universally as the "Shachtmanites."

Dwight Macdonald abandoned the Workers Party only a few months after Burnham. The beginning of his movement out of the party came when the editors of *New Internationalist* at first refused to publish a 30,000-word article about Nazism in which Macdonald argued that Nazi Germany was also characterized, like the Soviet Union, by "bureaucratic collectivism." As he wrote many years later, "The editors were not enthusiastic; they were, frankly, rather disappointed in the article, which struck them as half-baked, superficial, trivial, boring and badly written," but finally agreed to publish a 4,000-word summary of it. Macdonald commented that "since everything else I'd submitted since 1938 had been gladly printed—

professional journalists don't grow on trees, not on Trotskyist trees—I concluded they might also have some objections to the heretodox nature of my thesis."

Subsequently, Macdonald was removed from the editorial board of the *New Internationalist* "for conduct unbecoming a Marxist," and articles by him in *Partisan Review* were sharply attacked by Shachtman and others. So on March 22, 1941, Macdonald wrote an 8,000-word letter which was a kind of ultimatum to the Workers Party leadership. He asked for internal party discussion of issues he had raised and expressed hope "of arresting the present rapid degeneration of the Workers Party into the kind of undesirable bureaucratic-conservative regime we rejected last year in the Socialist Workers Party." He later wrote that "the rectifications were not made, the degeneration was not arrested, and a few weeks later I resigned from the party."⁶⁶

"Bureaucratic Collectivism" Defined

Once they were out of the Socialist Workers Party the w^r people renewed among themselves discussion concerning the nature of the Soviet state and society. Shachtman took the lead, attempting to define the "bureaucratic collectivism" which he, Burnham, and others had decided was the proper description of what existed in the USSR.

The fundamental document which defined the position of the Shachtmanites on the nature of the Soviet Union was his essay dated December 3, 1940. Although in this he used the phrase "bureaucratic state socialism," rather than "bureaucratic collectivism," Shachtman noted in his book *The Bureaucratic Revolution*, in which this essay was republished, that "to avoid even a verbal identification of the Stalinist regime with socialism, I subsequently dropped this term and used in its stead 'bureaucratic collectivism.'"⁶⁷ This was the phrase used in the resolution adopted at the September 1941 convention of the Workers Party, which

first put the organization on record in support of the "bureaucratic collectivist" idea.⁶⁸

Shachtman started his discussion with tribute to Trotsky's contributions to understanding the evolution of the USSR. He then summed up "our traditional view of the character of the Soviet Union" in the following terms: "to guarantee progress toward socialism, the existence of nationalized property is necessary but not sufficient—a revolutionary proletarian regime is needed in that country, plus favorable international conditions [victory of the proletariat in more advanced capitalist countries]. To characterize the Soviet Union as a workers' state, the existence of nationalized property is necessary and sufficient. The Stalinist bureaucracy is a caste. To become a ruling class, it must establish new property forms."⁶⁹

Shachtman then argued that Trotsky's own document, "The U.S.S.R. in War," written right after the outbreak of the war, "declared it *theoretically possible* . . . 1. for the property forms and relations now existing in the Soviet Union to continue existing and yet represent not a workers' state but a new exploiting society; and 2. for the bureaucracy now existing in the Soviet Union to become a new exploiting and ruling class without changing the property forms and relations it now rests upon."⁷⁰

This was, in fact, what had happened, argued Shachtman. He said that under capitalism the bourgeoisie was the ruling class because it owned the means of production and distribution through the instrumentality of private property, whereas the proletariat owned nothing except its labor power. Because of its control of the economy the bourgeoisie dominated the state.

In the case of the Soviet Union the state had taken over the means of production and distribution under the Bolshevik regime. Thereafter, although the proletariat "remains a property-less class," its position has fundamentally changed: "the essence of the change lies in the fact that the working class is in command of that state-owned property

because the state is the proletariat organized as the ruling class (through its Soviets, its army, its courts and institutions like the party, the unions, the factory committees, etc.). There is the hub of the question."⁷¹

However, with the Stalinist "counter-revolution," Shachtman argued that there "came the end of rule of the working class. The Soviets were eviscerated and finally wiped out formally by decree. The trade unions were converted into slave-drivers cracking the whip over the working class. Workers' control in the factories went a dozen years ago. The people were forbidden to bear arms, even nonexplosive weapons. . . . The Militia system gave way decisively to the army separated from the people. . . . The Communist Party was gutted, and the Bolsheviks in it broken in two, imprisoned, exiled and finally shot."⁷² It was the bureaucracy which had displaced the proletariat, according to Shachtman. He argued that "the bureaucracy is no longer the controlled and revocable 'managers and superintendents' employed by the workers' state in the party, the state apparatus, the industries, the army, the unions, the fields, but the owners and controllers of the state, which is in turn the repository of collectivized property and thereby the employer of all hired hands, the masses of the workers, above all, included."⁷³

Shachtman summed up this process, saying, "The workers of the Soviet Union were unable to hold power. That they lost it in a peculiar, unforeseen and even unforeseeable way—not because of a bourgeois restoration, but in the form of the seizure of power by a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy which retained and based itself on the new, collectivist form of property—is true. But they did lose power. . . ."⁷⁴

The Continued Struggle Over Bureaucratic Collectivism

Although the Shachtman position on the nature of the Soviet Union was adopted "by

a narrow margin" at the Workers Party 1941 convention,⁷⁵ the issue continued to be debated within the party. At that convention C. L. R. James presented a resolution describing the Soviet Union as "state capitalist." He was an important member of the Shachtmanite group. A native of Trinidad, he had been a leading figure in the British Trotskyist movement in its early years. Upon arriving in the United States in 1938 he had been toured around the country by the Socialist Workers Party, in part in an attempt to recruit blacks to the organization, at a time when they amounted to only a handful.⁷⁶ As an official representative of British Trotskyists on the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, he was one of the two non-Americans there to side with the Shachtmanites.

Within the Workers Party, James regularly edited a column in *Labor Action* on "The Negro's Fight." He edited a special issue of *New Internationalist* after the fall of France, setting forth the wp's opposition to the war.⁷⁷ He also established contact for the wp with the sharecroppers' movement then active in Missouri.⁷⁸

In the Workers Party controversy over the nature of the Soviet Union, James argued that essentially the role of the Soviet bureaucracy was not qualitatively different from that of the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries. He said that "today the bureaucracy . . . plans in order to get as much surplus value as possible from the workers, it plans to preserve itself against other capitalist classes. An individual capitalist who is unable to extract surplus value goes bankrupt, gets a government subsidy, or allows his capital to lie fallow. The state, as national capitalist, produced in certain branches at a loss, which is atoned for by gain in others. Why is the total national capital any less capital because it exploits the workers under unified control instead of in separate conflicting parts?"⁷⁹

C. L. R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya and their followers (known by the two lead-

ers' pseudonyms as the Johnson-Forrest Tendency) finally left the Workers Party in 1947, and in spite of the position they had maintained on the "Russian question" rejoined the Socialist Workers Party. By the early 1950s James had quit the SWP again, and for a while maintained his own small faction.⁸⁰

The issue raised by James within the WP, although appearing esoteric to an outsider, was of considerable consequence in terms of Marxist theory and politics. If the Soviet Union was characterized by state capitalism, that meant it was just a new version of the capitalism about which Marx, Engels, Lenin, and others had written. However, if Shachtman was right and the Soviet Union was a "bureaucratic collectivist" economy and society, that meant that it was something new and that Marx's prediction that capitalism could be succeeded only by socialism was wrong—that there was a possibility of something quite different developing.⁸¹

International Contacts of the Workers Party

The Workers Party continued to claim that it was part of the Fourth International. Although it was not able to make this claim effective, there was certain support for the position of the Shachtmanites within the leadership of the Fourth International.

In December 1940 *Labor Action* published a declaration signed by four members of the Bureau of the International, identified as Brown, Anthony, Alberts, and Trent. It said that "the split in the American section of the International has had direct and immediate repercussions in the International as a whole and in its central institutions in particular." The declaration denounced the "Emergency International Conference" of the FI which had been held on the initiative of the SWP after the SWP split. The declaration went on to say that "the undersigned comrades represent the majority of the In-

ternational Bureau of the Fourth International. . . . These comrades supported, as is known, the viewpoint of the Minority of the Socialist Workers Party, now organized as the Workers Party. This viewpoint has also been endorsed by the Brazilian Section of the International, the Uruguayan section, by two important sections in Asia which have recently come over to the program of the Fourth International, and by groups of comrades and individuals in other sections throughout the world."⁸²

Emanuel Geltman, as the first International Secretary of the Workers Party, had extensive correspondence with leaders of Trotskyist groups in various countries. One of these was the dissident leader of the Dutch Trotskyists, Sneevliet, with whom he had a considerable exchange of letters. Another group which had some sympathy for the Shachtmanite position consisted of some of the leaders of the Belgian Trotskyists.⁸³

In spite of the claims of support from outside of the United States, no Shachtmanite faction of the Fourth International was organized at that time. At the first full-fledged postwar congress of the Fourth International in Paris in 1948 the Workers Party was recognized as a "sympathetic organization," which could be represented by delegates having "consultative rights," which meant that they could speak on the floor and could vote—but their vote would not be counted. Shachtman represented the Workers Party at that congress. It was the last time the Shachtmanites were able to participate in the proceedings of the Fourth International.

The Workers Party During World War II

Throughout World War II the Workers Party maintained its "Third Camp" position. This meant that it continued, on a political level at least, to oppose support of either side in the war, even after the attack of the Nazis on the Soviet Union and entry of the United

States into the conflict. This contrasted with the position of the Socialist Workers Party, which in pursuance of its "defensist" doctrine had to support participation of the Soviet Union and thus "objectively" the Allied side in the conflict after June 1941.

Ironically, the avowedly antiwar Workers Party suffered less at the hands of U.S. authorities during the war than did the pro-Soviet Socialist Workers Party. There were no Smith Act prosecutions against the Shachtmanites such as those against the swp. However, as we will discuss, there were very particular political reasons for the legal action taken against the official U.S. Trotskyites.

Although the Workers Party did not politically support the war, it did not call on its members to refuse military service or try to sabotage the war effort. Workers Party members and leaders were as much affected by the draft and other results of the war as anyone else. Military conscription in particular had an impact on the functioning of the party. Irving Howe, editor of *Labor Action*, was drafted. Then his successor, Emanuel Geltman, was also called. At that point Shachtman came up with what he thought was an ingenious way to prevent Geltman from being mobilized: for him to inform the military authorities fully of his "revolutionary" activities, on the supposition that the armed forces would not want such a "subversive" in their midst. This plot did not work; Geltman was not only drafted, but was soon with the U.S. Army stationed in Great Britain.⁸⁴

Workers Party leaders and members who remained civilians worked during the war not only to keep the party active but to extend its influence. They particularly tried to gain support in the labor movement. Among the areas in which the party did trade union work was the shipyard workers in the Camden, New Jersey, area. There they helped organize the opposition to the cio's Shipbuilding Workers Union leaders John Green and Philip Van Gelder, former Socialists who were by then allied with the Commu-

nists. The Workers Party members there fought against efforts of Green and Van Gelder to downplay any labor protests, on the ground that these would interfere with the need to turn out ships required in the war, and that production should not be disrupted. However, the Shachtmanites had little success in trying to oust the Green-Van Gelder leadership.⁸⁵

The "Dissent" Split

A few years after the war the Shachtmanites underwent a split which, although it did not bring into existence any new radical party, resulted in establishment of a periodical which became a significant influence on the U.S. left for many years. This was the break-away which gave rise to *Dissent*. The dissident group consisted principally of Emanuel Geltman, Stanley Plastrik, and Irving Howe.

Irving Howe subsequently remembered that he began to have doubts about the Workers Party position after getting out of the armed forces and returning to party work as editor of *Labor Action*. His first question was whether the party had been right in opposing the Allies' cause in the war.⁸⁶ However, such retroactive reevaluation was not what began to cause serious discrepancies within the Shachtmanite ranks.

The Marshall Plan generated the first controversies which were to result in the split away of the *Dissent* group. Shachtman and the majority of the leadership were strongly opposed to any support of the Marshall Plan. Geltman, however, took the lead in the Political Committee in arguing that the Workers Party ought to support the plan. He and his allies in the party leadership argued that for there to be a labor and socialist movement there had to be an economy which could employ the workers, and the Marshall Plan was an effort to reestablish such an economy in Europe. In addition, the only way to stop Soviet expansionism, to which the Workers Party was opposed, was to reconstruct the European economy.

Shachtman would not accept such arguments. On the contrary, he saw support of the Marshall Plan as support of "American imperialism" and he at one point announced dramatically that he would support American imperialism only when hair grew on the palm of his hands. [Years later, when Shachtman was supporting the United States in the Vietnam War, Geltman asked on several occasions to see the hair growing on Shachtman's palms]. Shachtman continued to have the support of a majority of the party leaders for his position.⁸⁷

During the 1948 election the party opposed both Truman and Dewey. Geltman, as editor of *Labor Action*, wrote numerous articles and editorials about the supposed Tweedledee and Tweedledum nature of that campaign. Some months later he reached the conclusion that the Shachtmanites had been wrong in their position, and he raised this question in a meeting of the Political Committee early in 1950 and suggested a discussion of the issue. Years later Geltman, whose "party name" was Manny Garret, remembered that his suggestion had met with an exceedingly frigid reception. One member of the committee commented that "what Garret has said is beyond the Pale," and the meeting went on as if Geltman had not spoken. He finally turned to Stanley Plastrik, another committee member, and observed that it looked as if he and Plastrik were not present.

Even organizational questions arose. Geltman and his friends concluded that it was silly to maintain all of the panoply of a "Bolshevik" party, with a political committee, a central committee, and other organs, when the total membership of the group could not fill a medium-sized lecture hall.⁸⁸ However, although Shachtman and the other leaders had been willing in 1949 to give up the pretence that they were a "party" by renaming the organization the Independent Socialist League (ISL), they were still Bolshevik enough not to give up the panoply presumably appropriate to a democratic centralist group.

The final break of the *Dissent* group with the ISL did not come until 1952. Howe and Plastrik first resigned from the ISL. They sent a long letter explaining their point of view. It was harder for Geltman to break, since he had been a Trotskyist from the beginning of his political activity, and had been particularly close to Shachtman. It was several weeks after Howe and Plastrik left the ISL before Geltman also sent a (short) letter of resignation.⁸⁹

This split in the ranks of the ISL was not particularly bitter. At the first convention after the *Dissent* group broke away, a resolution was adopted which said that "*Dissent* is the organ of elements who desire to express their separation from the politics of Third Camp independent socialism while still attempting to express a variety of 'leftist' or socialist opinion," and added that "we do not believe that its editors can find a stable position in this area. . . ." However, it also said that "ISL members are free to write articles for *Dissent*. . . ."⁹⁰

The Third Force/Labor Party Position

After the general agreement on the bureaucratic collectivism position by the Shachtmanites, they no longer devoted time to discussion of the nature of the Soviet Union. Rather, they concentrated on presentation of their Third Camp position on international affairs and on advocating the establishment of an independent labor party in the United States. These two positions were stated for the last time by a national meeting of the ISL in the Third National Convention in October 1954. Two major resolutions were adopted at that convention dealing with the Third Camp issue and the independent labor party idea.

According to *Labor Action's* report on this convention, the Third Camp resolution "surveyed the trend of the capitalist war camp, particularly the United States, toward an increasingly reactionary foreign policy, its inherent inability to defeat Stalinism with any progressive consequences; the illu-

sions raised after the death of Stalin in the 'liberalization' of the Russian regime; the mistakes of neutralism; and many other aspects of world politics today. As against the policies of capitalist and Stalinist imperialism, which can only end in world catastrophe, the resolution develops the conceptions of genuine democracy and socialism as the means to destroy all imperialism." The convention rejected almost unanimously an amendment to support the Vietnamh.⁹¹

There was more disagreement concerning the League's position on internal U.S. politics than on its international position. The 1951 convention of the ISL had rejected by only one vote a move to endorse "Wilmington Abner, a Negro union leader on the (Chicago) south side," who "decided to fight the Democratic Party machine by running in the Democratic Party primaries as a labor man against the machine candidate."

However, the 1954 convention accepted two amendments to party policy, adopted previously by the Political Committee. One stated that "the convention decides that the categorical prohibition against ISL support for such candidates under any circumstances, which was adopted at the last convention of the League, is no longer operative." The second one stated that "in those instances where the participation of the trade unions in the Democratic Party has reached the point where their political activity dominates or controls the local functioning of that party, it is incumbent on us to urge that labor run its own—labor controlled—slate of candidates in primary and general elections for both public and inner-party office. . . ."⁹²

Movement Toward Unification With the Socialists

This change in the ISL position on formation of an independent labor party reflected a general shift in the thinking and policy within the Shachtmanite ranks. The final result of this shift was the decision of the

Fourth National Convention of the ISL to end the group's existence and merge with the new Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation (a merger in January 1957 of the Socialist Party and part of the SDF, the organization established by the Socialist Old Guard in 1936).

By early 1957 the leadership of the ISL was oriented toward liquidating its own organization and joining the SP-SDF. Typical of their orientation at the time was a debate-discussion which Shachtman had in Los Angeles with Arne Swabeck of the SWP and Harry Sitonen of the Socialist Party. *Labor Action* reported on this meeting that "Shachtman began his presentation with the fact that no socialist movement existed in the United States. There were, he asserted, only propaganda groups or sects. Besides these sects, which included all the groups speaking from the platform, there existed only the discredited and disgraced Communist Party, which had no future. . . ." The major thing differentiating the various "sects" from one another, according to Shachtman, was their position on "the Russian question." He insisted that since none of them was going to convince the others of the "correct" position on that issue, debates over it should be put aside, and they should "unite into the only party which has always presented a broad, loosely defined program based on democratic socialism—the Socialist Party—which had the respect of American workers, and in no way shares the disgrace of the Communist Party."⁹³

The Fourth National Convention of the ISL in July 1957 officially endorsed the idea of merger with the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation (SP-SDF). The convention document on unity, "Unity and Regroupment of the American Socialist Movement," asserted that the "collapse of the Communist Party," as the result of Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the events in Hungary, "clears the way for the reconstruction of the socialist movement in the U.S. For it was Stalinism, through the CP, that dominated

the radical movement for more than 20 years."

The resolution proclaimed that "what is required is a clearly democratic socialist pole of attraction as an alternative to Stalinism." It spelled out the ISL's understanding that "by democracy we mean the right of free speech, free press and assembly, the right to free trade unions with the right to strike, the right to form political parties and organizations free to alter the ruling regime by peaceful, legal processes."

The ISL noted that of all the groups claiming to be socialist, "one stands out uniquely: the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation. In size, it is not larger than others. It, however, is already broad enough in character to serve as an inclusive movement embracing a wide range of democratic-socialist tendencies. . . ."

Foreseeing one of the objections within the SP-SDF ranks to merging with the Shachtmanites, the resolution proclaimed that "the ISL has neither the intention nor the desire to unite with the SP in order to capture it, for even if this were possible, such a 'victory' would not only be meaningless but, what is worse, it would defeat the very objective of converting the SP from its present position of isolation and weakness to an effective, influential, broad democratic socialist movement in the best traditions of the Debs period."⁹⁴

Unity With the SP-SDF

There was considerable opposition within the Socialist Party -Social Democratic Federation to any kind of unity with the Shachtmanites. The author participated, as a member of the SP-SDF National Committee, in the controversy over this question. There were two fundamental objections on the part of the opponents. One was that the Shachtmanites still remained "Leninists," that is, believers in the "vanguard" theory of the party and in "democratic centralism." The second was that the Shachtmanites

were seeking to repeat the kind of "raid" on the Socialists that the Trotskyites had made in 1936-37. Those who favored admitting the ISLers were convinced, however, that at least the major figures in the ISL were no longer believers in a vanguard party or "democratic centralism." We were also certain that the ISL had no intention of trying either to take over or to leave the party later with as many new members as they could attract, as had occurred a quarter of a century before. In fact, we were virtually sure that, once in the SP-SDF, the Shachtmanites would split up, various ex-ISLers aligning themselves with the various tendencies which already existed within the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation.

At its convention in mid-1958 the SP-SDF finally agreed to accept the ISLers into its ranks. However, there was to be no formal merger of the two groups. The SP-SDF was only to admit the Shachtmanites as individuals, and their entry was staggered over a period of almost six months with those in New York, who were the most numerous, entering only in December 1959. Finally, before the process was completed, the Shachtmanites were to close down their periodicals.

There was relatively little opposition within the ISL to dissolution into the Socialist Party-SDF. However, a significant part of the League's youth organization repudiated the idea, under the leadership of Tim Wolfarth and James Robertson. They withdrew from the ISL before its absorption by the SP-SDF and joined the Socialist Workers Party, the "official" Trotskyist group. Subsequently, in the middle 1960s they organized two new dissident Trotskyist groups, the Workers League and the Spartacist League.

The Shachtmanites in the SP-SDF

As those of us who had favored the entry of the Shachtmanites into the SP-SDF had predicted, the ex-ISLers almost immediately split into two different groups. One, headed

by Shachtman himself, sided with the so-called Realignment Caucus in the SP-SDF, which favored the organization's dropping independent electoral activity and working basically within the Democratic Party. The other element, known for a while as the Meyer-Mendelsohn Caucus (from Debbie Myer and Sol Mendelsohn), sided with the so-called Debs Caucus, which supported continued running of candidates by the SP-SDF.

Within a few years the differentiation between Shachtmanites and "old Socialists" in the SP-SDF ranks lost all real meaning. There was one further reflex of Shachtmanism within the party during the 1960s. This arose from Shachtman's decision to put on sale his personal collection of internal documents of the Workers Party and ISL for the benefit of the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation. These materials were soon sold, and some of the most enthusiastic purchasers were the members of the Young People's Socialist League.

The YPSL not only bought up these old documents but began to study them with considerable intensity. As a result of perusing what Shachtman himself labeled "vintage Shachtman," they began to conceive of themselves as being Leninist and very "revolutionary." This development soon led them into sympathy with various Trotskyist groups, particularly the Spartacist faction, and to their becoming exceedingly critical of the "adult" organization with which they were affiliated, the SP-SDF. The upshot of these events was the suspension of the YPSL by the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation and the organization of a new youth group of the party (with the same name).

U.S. Trotskyism: The SWP During and Immediately After World War II

The Socialist Workers Party lost an appreciable part of its adult membership and most of its youth organization as a consequence of the Shachtmanite split in 1940. However, it remained the major Trotskyist organization in the United States, and the only U.S. affiliate of the Fourth International, in which it assumed new responsibilities as a consequence of the Nazi conquest of most of Europe. During World War II and immediately afterward the SWP gained more influence than it had previously had in the labor movement, and a considerable increase in membership. It experienced a kind of governmental persecution which it never had undergone before or was to experience again, and suffered another significant split.

The Labor Party Issue

Soon after the formation of the Socialist Workers Party the American Trotskyists fundamentally changed their position with regard to the idea of a Labor Party in the United States. They made this change largely on the basis of Trotsky's urging.

In March 1938 Cannon, Shachtman, Vincent Dunne, and Rose Karsner spent several days in Mexico in extensive conversations with Trotsky on a variety of subjects. Although most of the discussions centered on the question of establishing the Fourth International and the program which the new international organization should adopt, they also dealt with a number of issues directly concerned with the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. The Labor Party discussion took place on March 21. Cannon, Shacht-

man, and Dunne sketched for Trotsky certain specific problems concerning the Labor Party idea which the SWP was facing. In Minnesota, where the unions were strong backers of the state's Farmer Labor Party (FLP), the Stalinists were deeply enmeshed in the apparatus of the FLP and were using their influence there to try to undermine Trotskyist influence in the labor movement in Minneapolis. In New York the recently formed American Labor Party had the backing of many of the state's labor unions, but it was supporting the administration of Mayor Fiorello La Guardia in New York City and the Roosevelt administration on a national level. Throughout the country Labor's Nonpartisan League (LNPL), which had been organized by the CIO for the 1936 election, was involving unions in political activity to a greater degree than had hitherto been customary.

Cannon seemed to be relatively receptive to the idea of Trotskyist support for a Labor Party. Shachtman was more skeptical about the idea. Dunne was particularly anxious to get advice concerning how the Trotskyists should act in the Minnesota situation. Trotsky urged his American followers to change their traditional position, which had been one of opposition to the Labor Party idea. He advised them to urge the unions in which they had some influence to affiliate with Labor's Nonpartisan League and to fight within it for the idea of forming a Labor Party. However, Trotsky insisted that in supporting the Labor Party idea, they should approach the subject from a revolutionary perspective. They should not urge formation of a "reformist" party. Rather, they should suggest a program for the proposed Labor Party which would be based on the "transitional demands" which they all agreed would be the basis of the program for the new Fourth International. He particularly stressed the demands for workers' access to the books of firms for which they worked, "workers' control" of industry, and the establishment of workers' militia [which Can-

non suggested ought to be called "workers' defense groups," since "workers' militia" sounded "too strange" to the American workers). Finally Trotsky suggested to his followers that they should stress the eventual establishment of a "workers' and farmers'" government, which (although they might not say so to the workers) would be the equivalent of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."¹

Upon returning home, the SWP leaders pushed the change of policy on the Labor Party issue. They ran into some resistance, and no agreement was reached at a Central Committee Plenum in April 1938.² There was particularly vocal opposition in the SWP's youth group.³ However, after the April Plenum the Labor Party issue was debated in branch meetings, in the party's *Internal Bulletin*, and in the theoretical journal, *New Internationalist*. After three months of discussion the issue was submitted to the membership for a referendum vote, an unusual procedure in a Trotskyist organization. A resolution endorsing the idea of support for a Labor Party was adopted in October 1938.⁴

SWP "Disaffiliation" from the Fourth International

During the Second World War the Socialist Workers Party concentrated particularly on five kinds of activities. These were its association with the Fourth International, some limited electoral activity, work in the organized labor movement, participation in the civil rights struggle, and the campaign to defend its leaders who were indicted at the behest of the Department of Justice in mid-1941.

Although the SWP's activities in the Fourth International are dealt with elsewhere in this volume, here it is worthwhile to note the party's action in December 1940 to formally withdraw from the International. In October 1940 the U.S. Congress adopted the Voorhis Act, which provided for registration of "any group affiliated to a

foreign government or to an international political organization," and for such groups to turn over to the government lists of its members and officials. In response, "Rather than comply with these provisions, which would subject the party's members and sympathizers to government harassment, a special convention of the SWP in December 1940 voted to disaffiliate from the Fourth International."⁵ From then on the Socialist Workers Party maintained the legal fiction that it did not "belong" to the Fourth International. Its delegates to the various congresses of the International always presumably had "consultative" status, although they clearly played major roles in the proceedings, including votes on resolutions and other decisions.

For its part the U.S. government did not for some time give up its efforts to have the SWP register under the Voorhis Act. In October 1946 N. T. Elliff, chief of the Foreign Agents Registration Section, wrote the party about the matter. In reply, Cannon, in his capacity as national secretary, wrote the party's Chicago lawyer, Michael J. Myer, saying that "we would like you to reply to Mr. Elliff in our behalf that we have no relationship with the Fourth International or any other body that would require us to register with the Foreign Agents Registration Section." Cannon added that "the Socialist Workers Party is an autonomous independent organization and has no affiliation with parties or groups outside the United States. Our views are in many ways similar to the views of the Fourth International as expressed in the press of the Fourth International and its sections throughout the world, but this is only a matter of coincidence since we derive our views from a common socialist program."⁶

SWP Attitude Towards World War II

During the Second World War the activities and fate of the SWP were largely determined by the party's attitude toward that conflict.

In this regard the SWP followed policies consistent with their Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist philosophy, which they worked out with Trotsky in some detail in 1939-40. From the beginning they were opposed to taking sides in the "imperialist war." Typical of the SWP position was the "Resolution on Proletarian Military Policy" adopted in September 1940. It proclaimed, "The imperialist war is not our war and the militarism of the capitalist state is not our militarism. We do not support the war and militarism of the imperialists any more than we support the capitalist exploitation of workers in the factories. We are against the war as a whole just as we are against the rule of the class which conducts it, and never under any circumstances vote to give them any confidence in their conduct of the war or preparation for it—not a man, not a cent, not a gun with our support."

The Trotskyists recognized that many workers to whom they were appealing were impressed with the menace of Hitlerism and even favored military conscription. David Frankel has commented that "in keeping with its general approach to trying to reach the masses of workers, the SWP opposed the *strategy* of individual resistance to the draft, while defending the rights of those individuals who did refuse conscription." Beyond that, they developed their own particular "program" for the draft. The Resolution on Proletarian Military Policy proclaimed:

The revolutionary strategy can only be to take this militarism as a reality and counterpose a class program of the proletariat to the program of the imperialists at every point. We fight against sending the worker-soldiers into battle without proper training and equipment. We oppose the military direction of worker-soldiers by bourgeois officers who have no regard for their treatment, their protection, and their lives. We demand federal funds for the military training of workers and worker-officers under the control of

the trade unions. Military appropriations? Yes—but only for the establishment and equipment of worker training camps! Compulsory military training of the workers? Yes—but only under the control of the trade unions!'

In spite of its general opposition to World War II and U.S. participation in it, the swp was true to its Trotskyist position when it came to participation of the USSR in the struggle. An article by George Breitman (writing as Albert Parker) in *The Militant* in July 1941 stated, "Class conscious American Negroes must defend the Soviet Union against its imperialist enemies as part of their own struggle. . . . We do not pretend that the Soviet Union is an ideal country, where all problems have been solved, where socialism has been reached. Not at all. But it is a workers' state, where power has been taken out of the hands of the employers and the landlords, where capitalist bosses no longer run the factories for their own profit, where the foundations for a better life have been laid."⁸ Arguing that workers would rally to the defense of their union even if it were led by "reactionary bureaucrats," Breitman maintained that "in the same sense, advanced workers, Negro and white, must call for the defense of the Soviet Union. If the imperialist powers win, they will carve up the Soviet Union in the same way the bosses would break up a union."⁹

swp policies in other areas, including electoral action, and the trade union movement were largely determined by their attitude toward the war.

The 1940 Election

In 1940 President Franklin D. Roosevelt, by then strongly launched in his campaign to aid Great Britain to hold out against the Nazis, was a candidate for an unprecedented third term. This presented a problem for swp leaders.

When Farrell Dobbs visited Trotsky in

Mexico in January 1940, before proceeding to New York to assume the post of national labor secretary of the swp, he discussed the question of what the party should do. Trotsky urged that the party should name its own candidate against Roosevelt; at the same time he proposed a labor ticket to oppose the president, to be headed by Daniel J. Tobin, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, from whose staff Dobbs had recently resigned.

Dobbs reported back to the party leadership, but no decision on the election was taken. What the swp should do had not been decided by the time a delegation consisting of Cannon, Sam Gordon, Joseph Hansen, and Dobbs went to Mexico to discuss that and other issues with Trotsky in June 1940.

Trotsky was critical of the swp's not having launched its own campaign, whether with Tobin or someone from the party itself. Dobbs noted that "lacking our own slate, Trotsky continued, we had to choose between Earl Browder, who headed the Communist Party's presidential ticket, and Norman Thomas, the Socialist Party's candidate for president." Dobbs added that "Thomas was ruled out, though, because of his ties with Social Democrats standing at the left tip of the defenders of U.S. imperialism. So that reduced the options to Browder or Roosevelt."

Trotsky went on to suggest that the swp should give "critical support" to Earl Browder. He argued that "the cp leaders had begun to oppose U.S. entry into the war," and this fact would facilitate the work of the Trotskyists in making overtures to Communist workers and others under the cp's influence.

However, as Dobbs noted, "The swp delegation did not favor the tactic of critical support to Browder. We felt that it would run into indignation among anti-Stalinist militants in the trade unions." Trotsky did not insist on his formula, regarding it as a matter of "tactics," not of principle.

In the end, the swp did not endorse any

presidential candidate. It did run some of its own candidates on a statewide and local level, most notably in Minnesota. There they nominated Grace Carlson for the Senate against nominees of the Farmer-Labor Party, Republicans, Democrats, and an independent candidate. She received more votes than the combined total of Thomas and Browder in Minnesota, which the swp considered a triumph. Dobbs commented that the election showed that "the swp had become the leading party appealing to radicalized workers in the area, and many were coming closer to the organization upon learning of its program."¹⁰ In subsequent local and state elections the swp also named a few candidates.

The swp in the Labor Movement

During the Second World War the swp concentrated much of its attention on work within the organized labor movement. The surge of militancy which had characterized the 1930s had by no means been totally exhausted, and in fact membership in trade unions expanded greatly, as both employers and the government were more willing than in the past to reach agreement with their workers' unions to avoid interruptions with wartime production. The Trotskyites and other political groups were able to capitalize on this growth of the labor movement.

The swp militants continued to develop influence in the industrial unions of the Congress of Industrial Organizations which had begun in the 1930s. As one swp observer noted years later, "Important fractions were built up in auto, in maritime, in shipbuilding, and in other industries. At no time in its history, including the Minneapolis period, had the party been as well rooted in the trade union movement. . . ."¹¹ The swp made particular headway in the United Automobile Workers, where their cohorts were led by Ernest Mazy. They may well have exaggerated their influence in the uaw and some other unions in this period. For example,

when B. J. Widick of the Shachtmanites went to Detroit and become active in a uaw local there, he was told by some of his swp ex-comrades that he was wasting his time, since they had the uaw in Detroit "sewed up" and would not allow the Shachtmanites to make any headway, an assertion which proved untrue.¹²

The West Coast Maritime Unions

Another trade union sector in which the swp was active, and reached the highest point of influence during World War II and immediately thereafter, was the maritime workers on the Pacific Coast. The basis of Trotskyist strength in that sector was their alliance with Harry Lundeberg, head of the Sailors Union of the Pacific (sup).

The sup was a venerable union, established in 1885, which had been greatly weakened by a failed general strike in 1921. For some time thereafter the rww's Marine Transport Workers Union No. 10, as well as the Communists' Marine Workers Industrial Union, had had some following among the Pacific Coast sailors. All of these elements participated in the revival of the sup in the 1930s, when the union had a certain syndicalist coloration—due more, according to Stephen Schwartz, to the syndicalist background of the Scandinavian workers who made up the largest element in the sup's membership than to the remnants of rww influence.

The first upsurge of the Pacific Coast maritime workers was the strike of longshoremen in May 1934, supported by the sup and other groups, which obtained a system of joint management-union-controlled hiring halls for longshoremen. This was followed by formation early in 1936 of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific (mfp), including the sup, the longshoremen, and several small shipboard unions. The first head of the mfp was the sailor Harry Lundeberg, who was elected head of the sup later in the year.

In November-December 1936 Lundeberg led the sup on a successful strike which ob-

tained a system of completely union-controlled hiring halls. Lundeberg was accused by longshore leader Harry Bridges of "betraying" the strike, since he had settled it without consulting the longshoremen or other unions which had been supporting it. This began a long series of conflicts between the SWP and the longshoremen, by then the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) of the CIO. The basic cause of the conflict was political. The ILWU, as well as the Marine Cooks and Stewards and some other smaller unions, were controlled or largely dominated by the Communist Party. The principal leader of those who sought to prevent a general takeover of the maritime unions on the West Coast by the CPUSA was Lundeberg.

In this struggle Lundeberg formed a de facto alliance with the Trotskyists, who had been able during 1936 to establish a modicum of influence in the Pacific maritime field. He named Barney Mayes, a Trotskyist and the son-in-law of Jack London, as editor of *Voice of the Federation*, the MWP's newspaper. Mayes had as his chief assistant Joseph Hansen, who was many years later to emerge as the principal successor to James P. Cannon as head of the Socialist Workers Party. Other Trotskyists who were active in the SWP and other Pacific maritime unions in the period were Tom Kerry and Frank Lovell. Non-Trotskyist leaders in the SWP and some other unions of the Maritime Federation supported a number of Trotskyist positions. Thus, a number of them telegraphed their support of Trotsky to the Dewey Commission hearings in Mexico City. *West Coast Sailor*, the SWP newspaper, denounced the Stalinist provocation which had led to the May 1937 uprising of anarchists, POUMists, and others in Barcelona.¹³

The Lundeberg-SWP alliance in the maritime field was extended to some degree to the Atlantic Coast when in 1939 SWP member Tom Kerry was sent by Lundeberg to New York to help efforts to organize the new Seafarers International Union (SIU). The SIU had recently been chartered as a nation-

wide organization by the American Federation of Labor, with the SWP as its core. Kerry undertook to edit *Seafarers Log*, the SIU's newly established paper.¹⁴

The struggle of the Lundeberg-SWP coalition reached a high point during World War II when the SWP reacted strongly against Harry Bridges's ardent acceptance (after June 1941) of the "no strike pledge" which the Roosevelt Administration was encouraging. During that period SWP leader Frank Lovell published a book, *Maritime*, under the pseudonym Frederick J. Lang, in which he strongly supported Lundeberg's role.

The last achievement of the SWP-Lundeberg alliance was a victorious strike of the SWP-SIU in September 1946. It was followed by a defeat of a strike called by Bridges. Thereafter, the intense hostility between the Lundeberg and Bridges forces began to be modified. At that point, apparently, Lundeberg felt no further need for his Trotskyist allies, and by 1949 there had been an open break between Lundeberg and the SWP maritime cadre. The break brought the virtually total disappearance of any further Trotskyist influence among the maritime workers.¹⁵

The Teamsters Union

Certainly one of the major activities of leaders and members of the Socialist Workers Party during World War II was the defense of those of its major figures who were indicted—and in some cases sent to jail—by the United States government. The origins of this persecution and prosecution of the SWP are to be found in the activities of a small number of Trotskyists, particularly Farrell Dobbs, in the AFL's International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT).

The events of the early 1940s had their antecedents half a decade before. In 1935–36 IBT President Daniel Tobin made his first effort to destroy the influence which the Trotskyists had acquired a year or so before among the teamsters of Minneapolis. He chartered a rival Local 500 to Local 574, which was controlled by the Trotskyists,

and sent in a leading organizer, Meyer Lewis, to try to destroy Local 574. This move encountered resistance not only among the teamsters, but from virtually the whole labor movement of the city. As a consequence Tobin backed down, merging Locals 574 and 500 into a new Local 544, which the Trotskyists continued to control.¹⁶

This reunification of the Minneapolis teamsters met some opposition within the Socialist Workers Party. Cannon himself had doubts about it. Dobbs wrote that "the leading party comrades, including Jim, were hesitant about our proposed settlement with Tobin. There was concern among them as to whether we could survive under the terms involved. It might be better, they felt, to go down fighting than to risk being compromised as revolutionists, if the arrangement went wrong on us."¹⁷

Cannon went to Minneapolis to confer with the local Trotskyists. They finally convinced him that they would be able to control the proposed new Local 544, and that they would not sully their revolutionary honor by agreeing to merge the old Local 574 with Dan Tobin's Local 500. When the matter was put to the rank and file of Local 574 the merger was approved by a vote of about two to one.¹⁸

For a while after this incident Tobin refused to interfere further with the Trotskyites' control of the Minneapolis teamsters. When a dissident group within Local 544 brought a court suit against its leaders, alleging misuse of union funds and seeking to have the local put into receivership, Tobin refused to give any support to the maneuver. As a result of this case the Dunne brothers were fined \$56,000 and Karl Skoglund was removed from the presidency of Local 544 by the court on the grounds that since he was not a United States citizen he was not qualified, according to the constitution of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, to be head of a local.¹⁹

Subsequently, basing himself in Local 544 and the Minneapolis Joint Council of the Teamsters, Dobbs, one of the principal lead-

ers of Local 544, began to undertake unionization of the over-the-road truckdrivers. These more or less long-distance drivers had until then been largely ignored by the I.B.T. Tobin had doubts about the feasibility of organizing them.²⁰ Dobbs argued that they were the key to the expansion of the size and power of the Brotherhood. Not only were they themselves a substantial part of the total number of teamsters, but if they were unionized they could serve as "missionaries" for the union in unorganized cities and towns, since they had contacts in virtually all parts of the country.

Dobbs succeeded first in establishing the North Central District Drivers Council, composed of teamster locals from the Dakotas, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and upper Michigan. This organization, which was later transformed into the Central States Drivers Council, sought to establish a pattern of regional bargaining for the over-the-road truck drivers. When the employers refused to negotiate on that basis, Dobbs succeeded in getting an agreement with the I.B.T. locals in Chicago, the hub of over-the-road trucking in the Middle West, to refuse to handle the trucks belonging to firms which would not join in the regional collective bargaining process. This strategy soon won victory for the union.²¹

One of the young organizers who was assigned by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to help Dobbs in his campaign was James Hoffa, who had had some experience in Michigan with a considerably more limited effort in the same direction. Many years later Hoffa paid tribute to the leadership of Dobbs in this organizing campaign: "I refuse, therefore, to make any judgment about Farrell Dobbs. The fact that his exhortations in later years left me unmoved and that his logic eluded me does not mean he has not made a serious contribution to human thinking and striving. We cannot measure with today's yardsticks matters that should be viewed through the transit of time. As a fellow labor organizer, I view Farrell Dobbs subjectively. He was one heck

of a fine labor organizer. Period. On this matter only am I qualified to speak."²²

As a result of Dobbs's success in his organizing efforts on behalf of the IBT, President Tobin temporarily overcame his dislike of Trotskyism sufficiently to offer Dobbs a position as general organizer of the union. Dobbs assumed that post on May 1, 1939.

At the time of the establishment of the SWP in January 1938 it had been decided that ultimately Farrell Dobbs would move to New York to take over the post of national labor secretary of the party. Pending his arrival in New York B. J. Widick, one of the SWP's leading labor journalists, served in Dobbs' place as a member of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party.²³

A few months after Dobbs had assumed the position of general organizer of the IBT he and other party leaders came to the conclusion that it was time for him to resign his union position and to assume his post in the party. Daniel Tobin had clearly indicated his support for President Roosevelt's policy of aid to the Allies in the Second World War and a clash between him and Dobbs seemed more or less inevitable. As a consequence, Dobbs presented his resignation as general organizer in a meeting with Tobin in December 1939. In that session Tobin used all of his quite extensive powers of persuasion to try to convince Dobbs to stay with the union and give up his proposed political activities. As Dobbs described the meeting, Tobin seemed genuinely perplexed that a rising young figure in his union would turn down a most promising career in the IBT leadership to assume what certainly seemed to Tobin to be a thankless task in a relatively obscure political group with strange ideas.²⁴

The Persecution and Prosecution of the SWP

A bit more than a year after the resignation of Dobbs from his post in the IBT, Tobin began a campaign once and for all to destroy

Trotskyist influence among the Minneapolis teamsters. This was soon followed by government prosecution not only of the Minneapolis teamsters' leaders but of most of the top figures in the Socialist Workers Party.

Ralph and Estelle James have noted that in April 1941 "a subcommittee of the General Executive Board, conducted by Secretary-Treasurer John Gillespie, met in Chicago with all concerned to examine whether 544's officers were 'Communitistic, alien, and grossly negligent and inefficient.' The hearing centered totally about the first of these charges, and the results were largely predetermined, for the Dunnes had made no secret of their political affiliation."

Two months later, the General Executive Board proclaimed the Socialist Workers Party to be a "subversive, revolutionary party" and demanded that all IBT officers resign from it. At the same time it was decreed that Local 544 should be placed under a "trusteeship" to be named by President Tobin, in spite of the fact that the officers of the local had gone so far as to formally resign from the SWP following the March 1941 meeting of the General Board's subcommittee.²⁵

The Trotskyists in Local 544 did not accept this attack without protest. In a meeting on June 9, attended by Dobbs, who still maintained his membership in the organization, Local 544 voted by a show of hands to withdraw from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and affiliate with the CIO. Denny Lewis, brother of CIO chief John L. Lewis and head of the CIO's United Construction Workers Organizing Committee, wired the Local 544 leaders that his organization "will be happy to charter a local union of truck drivers and helpers in the Minneapolis area," adding, "We visualize this move on the part of the truck drivers in Minneapolis into our organization as the first step towards the complete organization of truck drivers in the United States in the CIO."²⁶

The CIO quickly established a Motor

Transport and Allied Workers Industrial Union and sent in a CIO staff to help Local 544 and at the same time carry on teamster organizing activities in CIO centers such as Flint and Pontiac, Michigan. The IWT countered with its own organizers and for several months there was a bitter battle between a phantom Local 544 under Tobin's receivership and the old Local 544, now part of the CIO. In late September 1941 final victory was assured to the AFL's group, in spite of its small membership, by its being certified by the Minnesota Department of Labor as the legal bargaining agent for teamsters in Minneapolis.

The battle of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters against Trotskyist domination of its Minneapolis affiliate, together with the government's prosecution of the leaders of Local 544, gained its objectives. By the end of the war Trotskyist control over the truckdrivers of Minneapolis had been almost totally destroyed.²⁷

The attempt to wrest control of the Minneapolis teamsters union from the Trotskyists had little more than started when the United States Government brought indictments against twenty-nine leaders of the Socialist Workers Party. Those indicted included most of the leaders of the Minneapolis teamsters as well as Grace Carlson and various national SWP leaders, including James Cannon, SWP National Secretary; Felix Morrow, editor of *The Militant*; Albert Goldman, member of *The Militant* editorial board; and Dobbs, national labor secretary of the party.

The *New York Times* reported that "The indictment charged that members of the Socialist Workers Party sought to be placed in key positions in all major industries—particularly these of transportation, shipping, manufacturing, farming, mining and lumbering—so they could induce laborers to join their party."

The indictment alleged that "the defendants would seek to bring about, whenever the time seemed propitious, an armed revolution against the Government of the

United States. . . . The party would and did attempt to bring about control of the militia by workers and laborers, and procured certain explosives, fire arms and ammunition and military equipment, and was organized into military [groups], united, armed and drilled under the name of "Union Defense Guard." " This claim clearly referred to the groups which the Minneapolis teamsters had organized from time to time to protect themselves from attacks from employer agents or strongarm groups of rival unions. The indictment said that the SWP claimed that the Union Defense Guard "was to guard against violent attempts to destroy trade unions," but "in truth they were to be used to overthrow and put down by force the constitutional government of the United States." It concluded that "the members accepted as ideal the formula of the Russian revolution of 1917, and certain defendants went from the Twin Cities to Mexico City, where they received advice and counsel from Leon Trotsky."²⁸

The indictments against the SWP leaders were drawn under two laws: a Civil War statute against sedition, and the Smith Act, passed in the previous year, and many years later virtually declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.²⁹

The trial of the SWP leaders was a cause célèbre for them and their opponents. Their prosecution was strongly applauded by the Communist Party—which itself was to suffer many indictments under the Smith Act a few years later. However, some of those whom the government had hoped to get to testify against the Trotskyists refused to do so. Years later James Hoffa wrote that "at the time of the trial I was asked, along with other Detroit officials, to testify against the Dunne brothers, but we declined to do so. . . ."³⁰

Ralph and Estelle James have summed up the results of the Minneapolis trials:

Charges against five of the defendants were dismissed by the judge due to lack of evidence, and five other defendants, in-

cluding Miles Dunne, were found innocent by the jury. Those remaining, most notably Vince Dunne and Farrell Dobbs, were convicted and given varying sentences of twelve to eighteen months' duration. The sentences were upheld on appeal in 1943. Many of the old 544 leaders spent little if any time in jail, but by the trial's end their spirit was broken and their power destroyed. Grant Dunne had committed suicide during the course of a nervous breakdown; another defendant was acquitted of the conspiracy charge but received a five-year prison term for 'embezzling' union dues and other properties which he had refused to turn over to the Teamsters. . . .³¹

One of those who suffered most severely was the teamster leader Carl Skoglund. The vengeful IWT saw to it that he could not obtain a job once he had been released from prison. Wherever he found employment the Teamsters mounted a picket line. He finally went to New Jersey, where he worked in a camp maintained by the swp. Then the Immigration Service moved against him, trying to deport him as an "undesirable alien." He was kept several months in Ellis Island, and was even put on a boat, ready to sail, when at the last moment, with the help of Norman Thomas, an injunction was obtained just in time to get him removed from the ship and freed.³²

Eighteen defendants were sent to jail, all being released somewhat early for good behavior. The six sentenced to one year—Harry DeBoer, Clarence Hamel, Edward Palmquist, Carl Kuehn, Alfred Russell, and Oscar Shoenfeld—were released in October 1944. The other twelve—Cannon, Jake Cooper, Oscar Coover, Sr., Farrell Dobbs, Vincent Dunne, Max Geldman, Albert Goldman, Emil Hansen, Carlos Hudson, Felix Morrow, Carl Skoglund, and Grace Carlson—were finally let go on January 24, 1945 after being held for not quite fourteen months.³³

As soon as their leaders had been indicted, the Socialist Workers Party mounted a major campaign in their defense. A Civil Rights Defense Committee was organized under the chairmanship of James T. Farrell, the famous novelist who was at the time "a dependable ally of the Socialist Workers Party."³⁴ Farrell's committee was able to mobilize very considerable support among intellectuals for the Trotskyists being prosecuted by the Roosevelt administration. At the same time they were also able to rally very substantial backing in the organized labor movement, particularly from the CIO unions (in some of which the party had a modicum of organization), but also from such AFL organizations as the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. The Trotskyists' principal appeal within organized labor was to the feeling of labor solidarity, arguing that the attack on the Minneapolis teamsters was a clear case of a governmental attempt to destroy an important trade union.

Within the labor movement the Trotskyists met their most bitter opposition not from conservative bureaucracies but from the Communist Party and the unions which it controlled or influenced. At the same time the Stalinists attacked many of those who expressed support for the Trotskyists, at one point even suggesting that Norman Thomas, who had backed the Defense Committee, ought himself to be prosecuted under the Smith Act.

The support which they were able to rally in the intellectual community and the labor movement perhaps prevented the outlawing of the Socialist Workers Party. There were certainly rumors at the time that the Roosevelt Administration was planning to take further steps against the Trotskyites, in addition to the trials. They did in fact suffer some other forms of persecution, including the seizure of some issues of *The Militant*

by the Post Office authorities and the subsequent suspension of second class mailing privileges of the newspaper.³⁵ Later the swp's theoretical organ, *Fourth International*, was also banned from the mails, an action which brought the quite anti-Trotskyist weekly *New Leader*, organ of the Social Democratic Federation, to observe that "apparently, the Post Office has arbitrarily extended its ban on all publications of the Trotskyist group." It added that "the last issues of *The Militant*, the weekly paper, have been released for mailing, about ten days after publication date. . . . If the Post Office found nothing to stop publication, the policy of holding up each issue for a Washington decision is an arbitrary censorship over a publication which may have dangerous repercussions."³⁶

Reasons for Persecution of the Trotskyists

The legal prosecution of the Socialist Workers Party leaders and the harassment of its periodicals by the U.S. Post Office were quite clearly cases of persecution, and they were rather unique during World War II. The Roosevelt administration did not engage in the kind of grotesque violations of civil liberties which the Wilson administration had carried out during and after World War I. No other radical group, whether it be the Communist Party, the Socialists (who were opposed to entry into the war before Pearl Harbor, and remained very critical of the conduct of the war thereafter), or the Shachtmanites and other dissident Trotskyist groups suffered at the hand of the government as did the swp.

This fact raises the question of why the Roosevelt administration took such measures against the Socialist Workers Party. The reason most widely accepted then and later by both members and leaders of the swp and by people outside the party was expressed at the time of the indictment of the Trotskyist leaders by Albert Goldman.

He commented then that the indictment "was an attempt by President Roosevelt to pay political debts to Daniel J. Tobin, head of the A.F. of L. teamsters' union."³⁷

Tobin was, indeed, a person to whom Roosevelt owed considerable political debts. He had headed the Democratic Party's campaign in organized labor to win support for Roosevelt's reelection for a third term in 1940. He was known as one of the most thorough-going Democrats in the organized labor movement. Furthermore, Tobin strongly supported Roosevelt's policies of aid to Great Britain in the months before Pearl Harbor.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which came to the support of the indicted Trotskyists, issued a statement emphasizing its belief that the indictment of the Trotskyist leaders was designed specifically to help Tobin's attempt to take control of the Minneapolis teamsters from the swp. It noted, according to Ralph and Estelle James, "communications between Tobin and Roosevelt, wherein Tobin had described the flight of 544 to the cio as 'a regrettable and dangerous condition . . . we feel that while our country is in a dangerous position, those disturbers who believe in the policies of foreign, radical governments, must be in some way prevented from pursuing this dangerous course.' Roosevelt quickly obliged by agreeing that jurisdictional fights were not desirable."

The ACLU report went on to say that "it seems reasonable to conclude that the government injected itself into the inter-union controversy in order to promote the interests of the one side which supported the administration's foreign and domestic policies. . . . Our conclusion is reinforced by the fact that it has been a matter of common knowledge for some years that the Socialist Workers Party, an insignificant little group of extremists, has been strongly represented in the Minneapolis labor movement. . . . Nothing charged in the indictment is of recent origin. The situation in Minneapolis is

no different now from that obtaining over the past five or ten years."³⁸

Ralph and Estelle James, writing in the mid-1960s, noted that "Farrell Dobbs today disputes the view of the ACLU and other liberal groups that the Justice Department's moves were political payoffs from Roosevelt to Tobin. He believes that the war and general class issues motivated the government's attack on the Trotskyists. . . ."³⁹ However, the facts remain that it was only the swers who were in conflict with Roosevelt's ally, Tobin, and that, although several other radical groups were at least as vociferously against Roosevelt's policies as were the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, only the swp leaders were indicted by the Roosevelt administration.

The swp in the Civil Rights Movement

During World War II, the Socialist Workers Party also got more or less extensively involved for the first time in the black civil rights struggle. Until then the swp had had very little black membership and had only had two blacks in its leadership, C. L. R. James, a British West Indian who had migrated to the United States from Great Britain some years before, and Ernest McKinney. During World War II both of these men were with the Shachtmanites.

The swp's weekly newspaper, *Socialist Appeal* until February 1, 1941, *The Militant* thereafter, kept close track of events within the black community and of events and incidents affecting blacks. It carried many articles, the largest number of them by George Breitman writing under the name Albert Parker. The newspaper and the party strongly supported the March on Washington Movement, organized and led in 1941 by the labor leader A. Philip Randolph, although they strongly opposed the compromise between Randolph and President Roosevelt which resulted in the actual descent on the capital being cancelled. Subse-

quently, *The Militant* reported extensively on two national conferences held by the organization which had originally been built up around the idea of a March on Washington.

The Militant paid special attention to segregation of and discrimination against blacks in the armed forces. It also dealt with the problem of the slowness of integration of minorities into the civilian work force, particularly in defense industries. In this connection it commented favorably on efforts of various unions, particularly the United Auto Workers, to place black workers in such jobs and to make it possible for them to receive training as skilled workers. There was continuous insistence on the ineffectiveness of the Fair Employment Practices Committee set up by President Roosevelt as part of the agreement calling off the 1941 March on Washington.

The paper also reported and commented on race riots which took place during the war, particularly in Detroit and Harlem, as well as "zoot suit" incidents involving Mexican-Americans in the Los Angeles area. It blamed these events on the attempts of the capitalists to keep the working class divided, emphasizing frequently that people acquire racial prejudices rather than being born with them.

In addition to constant coverage of the struggles of blacks in the party newspaper, the swp published at least three pamphlets on the subject during the war, all of them written by George Breitman. The first, *Defend the Negro Sailors on the U.S.S. Philadelphia*, was put out in November 1940, and dealt with the court martialing of a number of black sailors who had protested against the Jim Crow conditions they were subject to in the Navy. The second, *The Negro March on Washington*, published in June 1941, supported the movement for the march but was very critical of the supposed lack of militancy of A. Philip Randolph and other leaders of the effort. A third pamphlet, *Negroes in the Postwar World*, issued in

June 1943, dealt more generally with the blacks' struggle, emphasizing particularly the palliative nature of the moves taken by the Roosevelt administration during the war, and their failure to challenge the fundamental problems of segregation and discrimination.

The SWP was very critical of those who argued that there should be a dampening of the civil rights struggle in the name of supporting the war effort. It was particularly strong in its attacks on Communist Party arguments to this effect, especially by such black CP leaders as James Ford and Benjamin Davis.

The campaigns of the SWP on behalf of black causes during the war resulted in modest gains by the party in terms of membership and influence among the blacks. Fred Stanton has noted that the party recruited "hundreds of Black and working class members."⁴⁰

Among the new members was Dr. Edgar B. Kramer, a black doctor who resisted the draft on grounds of discrimination against blacks in the armed services, was indicted but won dismissal of all charges when he was defended by the SWP and the American Civil Liberties Union. He joined the SWP in 1943 and wrote a column for *The Militant* under the name Charles Jackson dealing principally with black issues.⁴¹

Gains by the SWP During and After World War II

The Socialist Workers Party was able to make considerable progress in membership, as well as in influence, during and immediately after World War II. James Cannon claimed in July 1945 that "we are now recruiting new members at the rate of 300 per year, and the rate of recruiting is increasing from month to month," and that "our new recruits are predominantly proletarian trade union militants, the very type out of which the future party of the revolution must be constructed."⁴² About two years later, when

the apportionment of delegates to the Second World Congress of the Fourth International was being discussed, the Socialist Workers Party claimed a membership of about 1,500.⁴³ Many years later, Fred Stanton said that the SWP membership had been about 600 after the Shachtmanite split, and about 1,500 by the end of the war.⁴⁴

The circulation of the party's press was also growing during these years. Speaking on July 25, 1945, Cannon noted that "a year ago the National Committee rather hesitatingly asked the membership to get 3,000 new subscribers" for *The Militant*, with the result that "the membership responded with a total of about 7,500 new subscriptions." He added that "again this year, a goal of 10,000 new subscribers was set by the party leadership and you responded with more than 22,000. Fund campaigns, with goals undreamed of in the old days, have been oversubscribed in every case."⁴⁵

A few months later, Cannon reported to the New York membership of the SWP that "the circulation of *The Militant* is held down to 31,000 now only because the printshop can't handle any more. But as soon as we make the necessary mechanical arrangements we are going to put on another subscription campaign for 10,000 new readers. We are all confident that by January 1 we will have a *Militant* circulation of 60,000."⁴⁶

However, the party was a victim of the substantial postwar inflation. In October 1946 it was forced to take drastic steps to cut back on its expenditures. As Cannon informed Charles Curtiss, a National Committee member from Los Angeles, they decided to cut *The Militant* from eight to six pages an issue, probably to reduce the size of *Fourth International*, temporarily to suspend all further publications by the party's Pioneer Publishers, to cut the SWP staff "to the absolute minimum" and to "ask the convention to authorize the collection of another fund of \$20,000."⁴⁷ There is no indication of how long these measures remained in effect.

The Theses on the American Revolution

About fifteen months after the end of World War II the Socialist Workers Party adopted what was described as "the SWP's basic programmatic document of the postwar period." Entitled "Theses on the American Revolution," it was basically written by James Cannon and was adopted by the party's Twelfth National Convention in November 1946. It was a somewhat apocalyptic document which predicted the absolute impossibility of any further stabilization of capitalism, the near-certainty of World War III in the very near future, and the early advent of revolution in the United States and, therefore, throughout the world. This document reflected the perspective at the time of not only the majority of the SWP leadership, but of most of their European counterparts as well.

The first of the fifteen "theses" which make up the document ended with the unequivocal assertions that "the blind alley in which world capitalism has arrived, and the U.S. with it, excludes a new organic era of capitalist stabilisation. The dominant world position of American imperialism now accentuates and aggravates the death agony of capitalism as a whole."⁴⁸

Theses II through V traced the events of the interwar period: first, the prosperity of the 1920s, based in the United States principally on the expansion of the domestic market, and followed by the Great Depression, out of which the U.S. economy was rescued only by war preparations. Thesis VI dealt with the war and postwar situation of the United States economy, and concluded among other things that "every single factor underlying the current 'peacetime' prosperity is ephemeral. This country has emerged not richer from the Second World War as was the case in the twenties, but poorer—in a far more impoverished world. . . . The basic conditions that precipitated the 1929 crisis when American capitalism enjoyed its

fullest health not only persist but have grown more malignant."⁴⁹

Thesis VII summed up the document's cataclysmic prediction about the future of the United State and world economy:

The following conclusion flows from the objective situation: U.S. imperialism which proved incapable of recovering from its crisis and stabilizing itself in the ten-year period preceding the outbreak of the Second World War is heading for an even more catastrophic explosion in the current postwar era. The cardinal factor which will light the fuse is this: The home market, after an initial and artificial revival, must contract. It cannot expand as it did in the twenties. What is really in store is not unbounded prosperity but a short-lived boom. In the wake of the boom must come another crisis and depression which will make the 1929-32 conditions look prosperous by comparison.⁵⁰

Thesis VIII argued that "the impending economic paroxysms" were leading "the American monopolists" to preparation for war with the Soviet Union. The document predicted that such a war not only would not solve U.S. domestic problems but also would meet "fierce resistance" not only from "the peoples of the USSR," but also from "the European and colonial masses who do not want to be the slaves of Wall Street" and within the United States itself. As a consequence "the workers' struggle for power in the U.S. is not a perspective of a distant and hazy future but the realistic program of our epoch."

Theses IX and X dealt with the interconnection between the revolution in the United States and in other parts of the world. Regardless of whether "the revolutionary movement starts in Europe, "colonial" areas or the United States, "The issue of socialism or capitalism will not be finally decided until it is decided in the U.S." Thesis X added that "the revolutionary victory of the work-

ers in the U.S. will seal the doom of the senile bourgeois regimes in every part of our planet, and of the Stalinist bureaucracy, if it still exists at the time."⁵¹

Thesis XI dealt with the "danger of bureaucratic degeneration after the revolutionary victory." It declared that "this can only arise from privileges which are in turn based on backwardness, poverty, and universal scarcities. Such a danger could have no material foundation within the U.S. Here the triumphant workers' and farmers' government would from the very beginning be able to organize socialist production on far higher levels than under capitalism, and virtually overnight assure such a high standard of living for the masses as would strip privileges in the material sense of any serious meaning whatever."⁵²

Thesis XII argued that objective conditions had prepared the U.S. working class for revolution. For one thing, "The numerical strength and social weight of the American working class, greatly increased by the war is overwhelming in the country's life." For another, the postwar wave of strikes indicated that the workers were ready to fight to preserve their relatively high living standards and that "in the given situation, therefore, the relatively high living standard of American workers is a revolutionary and not, as is commonly believed, a conservatizing factor."⁵³ Furthermore, the homogenization of the American working class, resulting from immigrants being succeeded by their children, and the growing incorporation of the blacks in the labor movement strengthened the revolutionary potential of the American workers.

Furthermore, this thesis argued, "The American workers have the advantage of being comparatively free, especially among the younger and most militant layers, from reformist prejudices. The class as a whole has not been infected with the debilitating poison of reformism, either of the classic 'Socialist' variety or the latter-day Stalinist brand. As a consequence, once they proceed

to action, they more readily accept the most radical solutions."

Thesis XIII dealt with the alleged "backwardness" of the U.S. working class, and argued that that had been disproven by the rapid growth of the trade union movement since the middle 1930s. It predicted that "under the impact of great events and pressing necessities the American workers will advance beyond the limits of trade unionism and acquire political class consciousness and organization in a similar sweeping movement."⁵⁴

Thesis XIV established that "the decisive instrument of the proletarian revolution is the party of the class conscious vanguard." It went on to argue that the fact that such a party is quite small does not militate against its ultimate victory, as was demonstrated with the case of the Bolsheviks in 1917. It concluded that "in the U.S. all the conditions are in the process of unfolding for the rapid transformation of the organized vanguard from a propaganda group to a mass party strong enough to lead the revolutionary struggle for power."⁵⁵

Obviously, as Thesis XV proudly proclaimed, "The revolutionary vanguard party, destined to lead this tumultuous revolutionary movement in the U.S., does not have to be created. It already exists, and its name is the *Socialist Workers Party*." The document concluded with the observation that "the task of Socialist Workers Party consists simply in this: to remain true to its program and banner; to render it more precise with each new development and apply it correctly in the class struggle; and to expand and grow with the growth of the revolutionary mass movement, always aspiring to lead it to victory in the struggle for political power."⁵⁶

The Goldman-Morrow Split

World War II was not over before the Socialist Workers Party was undergoing another factional dispute, which ended in a new split

in the party's ranks. It centered on somewhat the same issues as those which had caused the Shachtmanite schism half a decade earlier, and directly involved the question of relations between the SWP and the Workers Party. The leading dissidents on this occasion were Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow.

The new dispute probably had its origins in personal disagreements which arose among the Trotskyists incarcerated in Sandstone Prison. Subsequently, soon after leaving prison, James Cannon wrote (referring to Albert Goldman by one of his "party names," Morrison), that "all political and personal relations between us and Morrison, which didn't amount to much from the first day, were completely discontinued as far back as last June, and between us and Morrow about 90 percent." He added that "we left Sandstone with the conviction that personal relations with Morrison had been disrupted and broken off forever without any possibility of repair, and that political relations henceforth can only be of the most formal, businesslike character. We have conducted ourselves since our return from this standpoint."⁵⁷

The first issue raised by Goldman and Morrow concerned "the organizational question," that is, the democratic centralist theory and practice of the SWP. The two leaders complained about the "bureaucratic" nature of James Cannon's control over the party apparatus. These issues were raised as early as the Eleventh Convention of the SWP in November 1944 by supporters of the Goldman-Morrow point of view, although the two principal leaders were still in jail at the time.

The existence of a new factional lineup in the SWP became public knowledge for all who read the party's publications by a statement dated April 16, 1945, entitled "On the Internal Situation," which was published in the May 1945 issue of *Fourth International*. This statement was a species of truce between "the majority and minority point of

view as developed at the Eleventh Party Convention." In essence, this statement said that "there are no clearly defined differences at the present time on programmatic questions," and that in the light of that "it is possible and obligatory to collaborate harmoniously and constructively on the basis of the convention decisions . . ." and that "there is no basis for sharp factional struggle or for the existence of factional formations in the party ranks."⁵⁸

"Programmatic" Differences in the Morrow-Goldman Split

"Programmatic" differences arose very soon. The issues concerning the Trotskyist perspective on the immediate postwar world and resulting ideas about short and middle run strategy which the Socialist Workers Party and its European partners should follow were of fundamental significance for the whole international Trotskyist movement. The questions Goldman and Morrow raised were widely debated among Trotskyists in Europe as well as in the United States, and haunted the movement for a generation.

Felix Morrow and Albert Goldman were in fundamental disagreement with the "catastrophic" perspective of the SWP leadership, and of that of most of the Fourth International. More specifically, they were very much against the "Theses on the American Revolution" adopted late in 1946, and which had been in process of formulation for as long as three years before that.

Morrow-Goldman disagreed with the majority of the SWP leadership on at least four major points: They believed that postwar Europe would experience a strong economic recovery, based in large part on aid from the United States. They argued that "bourgeois democracy" would be restored in Western Europe, rather than the dictatorships foreseen by the SWP majority. They maintained that the revolution was not imminent in Western Europe, but rather was a matter of

at least several decades. Finally, they argued that during this considerable period of time, the best policy for the Trotskyist parties was to push for the utmost extension and expansion of "bourgeois democracy," as the only feasible way of showing its inadequacies for the achievement of socialism.

Morrow argued against the majority's insistence that the United States intended to "dismember" the European economies once it had defeated the Nazis. He argued that "in the long-run, of course, U.S. imperialism can solve none of Europe's economic problems . . . It is not enough, however, to state this long-term perspective. We must also estimate accurately the short-term perspective. The short-term perspective is that American imperialism will provide food and economic aid to Europe and will thus for a time appear before the European masses in a very different guise than German imperialism . . . Unlike Nazi occupation, American occupation will be followed by improvement in food supplies and in the economic situation generally. Where the Nazis removed factory machinery and transportation equipment, the Americans will bring them in . . ." ⁵⁹

Morrow and Goldman also argued that "bourgeois democracy" would exist in Western Europe for some time to come. Morrow argued that "with the collapse of fascism and the rise of the masses again to their feet, the question of what is to come can only be answered in terms of the situation of the revolutionary Marxist parties in the various European countries . . . No such mass revolutionary parties exist yet. The struggle of the masses is limited by the fact that it still accepts the leadership of the reformist parties. The *objective resultant* is bourgeois democracy." ⁶⁰

Morrow summed up his argument concerning the persistence for some time of "bourgeois democracy" thus: "In sum, the minority saw an evolution toward bourgeois democracy as the objective resultant of (1) the rising struggle of the proletariat, (2) the

limitations of that struggle due to the present hegemony of the Stalinists and Social Democrats and the smallness of the Fourth International parties; (3) the resistance of French imperialism, supporting itself on the masses, to U.S. domination; (4) the ability of U.S. imperialism to shift from methods of military dictatorship to bourgeois democratic methods under the given conditions; (5) the pressure of the U.S. and British masses in opposition to imposition of dictatorships." ⁶¹

European economic recovery and the reestablishment of liberal democracy meant in the view of Morrow and Goldman that the European Socialist revolution which the SWP and FI majority had been predicting as an immediate result of the end of the war would at best be very considerably postponed. Most particularly, hope for the new German revolution which had been at the center of the predictions of the Trotskyists' optimistic view was mistaken. On this point Morrow wrote that "you wrote all this without a single reference to the fact that the German proletariat would begin its life after Nazi defeat under military occupation and without a revolutionary party, and without the slightest attempt at appraising the state of class consciousness of the German proletariat after eleven years of Nazism."

Morrow also commented on what he thought were the roots of the SWP and FI's high expectations for a German revolution. He said, "To put it bluntly: all the phrases in its prediction about the German revolution—that the proletariat would from the first play a decisive role, soldiers' committees, workers' and peasants' soviets, etc.—were copied down once again in January 1945 by the European Secretariat from the 1938 program of the Fourth International. Seven years, and such years, had passed by but the European Secretariat did not change a comma. Exactly the same piece of copying had been done by the SWP majority in its October 1943 Plenum resolution in spite of the criticisms of the minority." ⁶²

If continued democratic regimes and not revolution were the immediate prospect, Morrow argued that the tactic of the Trotskyists ought to be to exploit these facts, not deny them. He wrote that "If the masses have democratic illusions, what follows? How shall we prove to the masses that their needs cannot be satisfied within the framework of the bourgeois-democratic state? This is of course not a new problem, and our answer is the Leninist answer: The more complete democracy we can win, the more it will become clear to the workers that it is not their lack of liberties but capitalism itself which is the cause of their suffering. In the fight for the most complete democracy, the Bolsheviks can demonstrate to the workers that it is the revolutionists and not the reformists who are the most devoted fighters for the needs of the people."⁶³

Another "programmatic" difference of Morrow and Goldman with the swp majority concerned the USSR. The Goldman-Morrow group clearly shared Natalia Sedova Trotsky's doubts about continuing to regard the Soviet Union as even a "degenerated" workers state. This issue constituted the background rather than the principal issue in the dispute between them and the Cannonite majority of the swp. It was not until Goldman had already left the party that Felix Morrow stated at an swp Plenum in May 1946 that he felt that "all the reasons we gave for defending the Soviet Union have disappeared."⁶⁴

Other Issues in Goldman-Morrow Split

As the factional fight developed, the opposition was critical of a number of positions taken by the party. It opposed what it conceived to be the "uncritical" support given by the swp to the faction of the United Automobile Workers Union headed by Walter Reuther. It also challenged the position taken by Cannon and the majority that the U.S. economy was facing a major postwar breakdown. Felix Morrow wrote shortly be-

fore his expulsion from the party in November 1946 that "The temporary inflation of the price-structure due to wartime shortages is coming to an end. . . . By confusing the *short-term* period of price-adjustment with the eventual development of a new economic crisis on the scale of the 1930s, and leaving out entirely the long-term effect of lower prices in facilitating the home market and export in an interim period or at least several years, the Political Committee conjures up an immediate crisis."⁶⁵

However, most of the controversy centered on the issue of reunification of the swp and the Shachtmanites. Goldman and Morrow had apparently had some conversations with the leaders of the Workers Party soon after being released from prison, and in these discussions brought up the possibility of a reunification of the two groups. They got enough encouragement from the wr leaders so that they officially raised the issue at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers Party on July 12, 1945. The majority of the Political Committee decided to refer the matter to the next Plenum of the National Committee.⁶⁶ Cannon's position on the issue was clear at the time. He reported to a New York party membership meeting soon afterwards that "The proposal for 'unity with the Shachtmanites' is not a concrete and realistic proposition for our party at the present time."⁶⁷

However, the Workers Party soon followed up the formal introduction of the unity issue in the swp leadership by a letter to that leadership in which they said, among other things, that "the interests of uniting the Fourth Internationalists in the United States on a sound foundation are more important than the regime in the Socialist Workers Party," and asking for discussions about the possibility of unity. As a consequence, the swp majority had the Political Committee send a reply in which, according to Cannon, it was stated that "we are in favor of the discussion they propose and will so recommend to our National Committee."⁶⁸

Cannon's seeming willingness to at least

discuss the possibility of unity with the Workers Party signified no rapprochement with the Goldman-Morrow minority in the SWP. At the same New York membership meeting he claimed that "the anarchistic leaders of the minority over-estimate the virtues and powers of 'direct action.' They think that by openly breaking discipline and laughing at party loyalty they have thereby eliminated these concepts from party life. I believe they are going to be disappointed; the party is going to pass judgment on them. The party is going to proceed as it always has in such cases: justly but firmly. . . ."⁶⁹

Subsequently, on September 15, 1945, Shachtman sent another letter asking for discussions of unity, and expressing the Workers Party people's willingness "to accept discipline as a minority of the SWP." The Political Committee of the SWP on September 21 agreed to discussions. A subcommittee consisting of Cannon, Bert Cochran, and Morris Lewit then met twice with Shachtman, E. R. McKinney, and Ernest Erber of the Workers Party. On October 2, Cannon reported to his Political Committee that "the WP had definitely agreed to accept the status of a disciplined minority, but that they had asked for their own internal bulletin."

Finally, a plenum of the SWP National Committee met on October 6-7, 1945 to discuss the unity issue. It adopted a resolution sponsored by the majority, which decided "(a) To endorse the letter and actions of the Political Committee in response to the letter from the WP . . . (b) To authorize the Political Committee to prepare and carry through a thorough discussion and clarification of the theoretical, political and organizational issues in dispute, and fix the position of the party precisely on every point in preparation for the consideration and action of the next party convention; (c) To reject any united front for propaganda."⁷⁰

The decision obviously did not satisfy the Goldman-Morrow minority. On January 26, 1946, "the minority faction in the National Committee," presented a statement of its

position. This read, "If in the coming weeks we can see any sign that we can reasonably consider as a move on your part toward resumption of negotiations for unity with the Workers Party, we shall remain in the Socialist Workers Party in order to work for the cause of unity. If, on the other hand, you give no sign of a desire to reconsider your stand against unity, then our place will be with the Workers Party." The Political Committee, by a vote of 6-1 (Morrow voting against), adopted a resolution rejecting this "ultimatum," on February 12, 1946.⁷¹

The position of the Goldman-Morrow minority had some support within the Fourth International. Natalia Sedova favored reunification of the SWP and WP,⁷² and the SWP minority also had the backing of the minority element in the French section and of the majority in the Revolutionary Communist Party of Great Britain.⁷³

Meanwhile, in December 1945 the Control Commission of the SWP began to look into alleged breaches of discipline by Albert Goldman, Felix Morrow and some of their supporters. It wrote a report which was submitted to a plenum of the National Committee on May 16, 1946, accusing them of having violated SWP discipline in their relations with the leaders of the Workers Party. Felix Morrow and most of the minority in New York announced that henceforward they would abide by party discipline.⁷⁴ Goldman and others from Chicago, on the other hand, announced that they were going to join the Workers Party which they did at the end of the month.⁷⁵

Felix Morrow continued his struggle within the Socialist Workers Party for another six months. The November 1946 convention of the party expelled him "for unauthorized collaboration with Shachtman's WP." He did not join the Workers Party, however.⁷⁶

Further SWP-WP Unity Negotiations

To the surprise of all concerned, the liquidation of the Goldman-Morrow opposition

within the SWP did not end the discussion of merger with the Workers Party. The cause of the revival of the issue was a visit to the United States at the end of January 1947 of Michel Pablo (Raptis), the secretary of the Fourth International. He came to discuss details of the Second Congress of the International which was then being planned for later in 1947. Max Shachtman and the Workers Party took advantage of this visit to present the case for reintegration of that party into the International, and as a consequence "through Pablo's intervention the WP leadership agreed to the conditions for unity with the SWP that they had rejected the previous year, in particular giving up their demand for a special internal bulletin for their faction within the SWP."⁷⁷

This turn of events led to the meeting of a new plenum of the National Committee of the SWP on February 15-16, 1947. In preparation, Cannon wrote a letter to the members of the National Committee in which he said that according to information provided by Pablo, a majority was assured in the coming congress of the International to reconfirm "the orthodox line" and to "specifically condemn the theories of bureaucratic collectivism, national revolution, retrogressionism, and the conception of the Stalinist parties in capitalist countries as non working class bodies." It was also clear, he said, that once these positions had been taken, "Membership thereafter should be conditional on acceptance of the political and organizational decisions of the congress and disciplined application of them in all political activity." Furthermore, the SWP had been assured that "On the SWP-WP question, the congress should condemn the political line developed by the WP, condemn the split of 1940, the maneuverist character of the unity proposal, and the Goldman split which accompanied it."⁷⁸

Cannon said that the SWP leaders had worked out with Pablo a "formula" to govern attendance at the World Congress by parties not then belonging to the Interna-

tion. This formula was that "unaffiliated groups desiring to participate in the international discussion prior to the congress must give a *written* undertaking to recognize the authority of the congress and pledge themselves in advance to accept its decisions on both political and organizational questions. On that condition they may participate in the international pre-congress discussion and may have fraternal representation at the congress, without voting rights."⁷⁹

The Workers Party after meetings of Shachtman and C. L. R. James, the leader of the WP faction strongly favoring unity with the SWP, finally agreed at a plenum of its National Committee to accept these conditions. As a consequence Cannon informed the members of his National Committee that "the majority opinion" in the Political Committee "is definitely crystallizing in favor of going through with the proposition as outlined above," and added that "I personally am convinced that, taking everything into account nationally and internationally, it is a correct and necessary step. . . ."⁸⁰

The February 1947 Plenum of the SWP agreed to the proposal for the Shachtmanites to participate in the preparations for the world congress of the Fourth International. It went further, and said that "if the National Committee of the WP wishes to expedite matters and effect the unification even before the holding of the extraordinary convention, the NC of the SWP will be agreeable to the proposition. . . ." To this end, "the National Committee of the SWP will recommend that all members of the WP as of February 10, 1947, be admitted into the ranks of the SWP as a body without prejudice or discrimination, and that this proviso be extended to include any new members who may be recruited by the WP in the meantime, provided they have not been previously members of the SWP."⁸¹

The next step was a joint statement by James Cannon and Max Shachtman, dated March 11, 1947, on the unification of the two parties. It recounted the agreement of

the Workers Party to accept the results of the coming congress of the International (referred to as the "extraordinary party convention" or EPC), "even if the EPC should adopt decisions which would place the members of the WP in the position of a minority." It also noted the acceptance of the proposals by the plenum of the SWP, and said that unity of the two parties would be based on the memberships at the time the unification took place, and added, "However, while the unity negotiations are in progress, neither party will admit into its ranks any individuals or groups who are now or who have formerly been members of the other party, except by agreement." On this basis, "the two national committees are recommending the unification of the two parties . . . as soon as the discussion now proceeding in the ranks of the two organizations is concluded."⁸²

Unity never took place between the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party. A new series of controversies developed over Cannon's having described the position of the Shachtmanites as one of "capitulation" to the SWP and the Fourth International; over the Workers Party's publication in *Labor Action* and *New International* of articles by ex-SWP member Jack Weber and by Ruth Fischer which the Cannonites regarded as provocative; over failure to cooperate in certain local election campaigns and union situations in several parts of the country; and the Workers' Party's challenge to the basis of representation at the coming World Congress which had been decided upon by the International Secretariat of the Fourth International.⁸³

The upshot was a proposal at a meeting of the Political Committee of the SWP on May 6, 1947, to reverse the decision to unite with the Workers Party.⁸⁴ As Cannon explained the situation a month later to the New York membership of his party, "it is equally obvious that any further consideration of the unity question with the Shachtmanites must await the terms of the congress. The terms of our plenum resolution do not in

our opinion at present require any alteration. The plenum says that the obligation they undertook to submit to the congress must be carried out in good faith, and that can only be tested by the congress itself."⁸⁵

That was about the last that was heard of the possibility of merging the Shachtmanites back into the Socialist Workers Party. However, the small pro-SWP faction within the WP led by C. L. R. James held its own national meeting in July 1947, and there decided to join the SWP.⁸⁶

Other Small Parties

During the years following the establishment of the Socialist Workers Party, there existed several small dissident Trotskyist groups in addition to the Shachtmanite and Oehlerite organizations. These were centered principally in New York and San Francisco.

In New York there existed in 1939-40 the Revolutionary Marxist League, led by Attilio Salammè and Karl Joerger. There also existed the Marxist Workers League, led by K. Mienev, which published in 1939 a periodical named *The Spark*, and in 1940 another known as *Power*. For a short while the Revolutionary Marxist League and the Marxist Workers League merged to form the Workers Party. It apparently had gone out of existence before the formation of the Shachtmanite group with that same name.

In California, centering in San Francisco, there existed in the 1937-1940 period the Marxist Workers Party. It maintained for some years a Marxian Labor College in San Francisco.⁸⁷

U.S. Trotskyism: The swp in the Difficult 1950s

The Socialist Workers Party's "Theses on the American Revolution" to the contrary notwithstanding, the United States did not suffer in the wake of World War II a new economic depression worse than that of the 1930s. There began instead a sustained period of economic growth and widespread improvement of living levels of large elements of the working class. Nor did the American working class move steadily and rapidly to the left, culminating in a revolutionary upsurge as the swp had predicted. Rather, the 1950s were a decade of conservatism and even reaction in many ways. The first Republican to occupy the White House in twenty years, Dwight Eisenhower, was there [with the votes of many workingmen] during most of the decade. During much of it, too, there was a current of demagogic reaction epitomized by but not confined to Senator Joseph McCarthy—who also enjoyed the backing of all too many workers.

The Socialist Workers Party suffered setbacks during the 1950s as a consequence of these and other factors. Fred Stanton has summed up the party's situation thus: "The failure of the Western European revolutions and the economic predominance of the U.S. internationally enabled American big business to make wage concessions to workers in this country, end the strike wave, and, in collaboration with the union bureaucrats, impose a witch-hunt and begin preparations for a new war against the Soviet Union. . . . These factors cut off the growth of the swp in that period; many of the Blacks and unionists recruited during and shortly after the war dropped out, and it was not until the

new rise of the Black struggle and the colonial revolutions of the 1960s (especially Cuba and Vietnam) that the party began to grow again."¹

Stanton might have added that in addition to its other woes the Socialist Workers Party suffered one significant split early in the decade and another less consequential one at the end of the period. On balance, the 1950s were a period of retrogression for Trotskyism in the United States.

The swp and the Witch Hunting of the 1950s

It was the Communist Party which suffered the bulk of the anti-radical persecution and prosecution by various arms of the government during the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Trotskyists were not without their victims as well. There is no record of how many members of the swp were deprived of their passports and were subjected to other kinds of disabilities and annoyances, although there were certainly a considerable number of such cases.

During this period there was one instance involving a member of the swp which gained nationwide publicity and aroused a wide range of support outside of the ranks of the Trotskyists. This was that of James Kutcher. He was a member of the Newark, New Jersey, branch of the swp who had been drafted into the army during World War II and had lost both of his legs fighting in Italy. Thereafter, he was fitted with artificial legs and was able to work, getting a job with the Veterans Administration in his home city.

However, with the issuance of the "Attorney General's List" in 1948, upon which the Socialist Workers Party appeared as one of the "subversive" organizations, Kutcher was dismissed by the Veterans Administration. He fought the case; and he and the swp were able to muster wide backing from nonparty organizations and individuals in the labor movement and elsewhere. Meanwhile, Kutcher continued to be subjected to

other petty but painful kinds of persecution—a move to evict his parents, with whom he lived, from a public housing project, and a move to cancel Kutcher's disability pension on grounds of his belonging to the *SWP*. All of these cases were finally won, either by administrative appeal or through the courts. In 1956, Kutcher was restored to his job with the Veterans Administration with full back pay.²

Meanwhile, the *SWP* had denounced the "anti-Communist" demagoguery of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Typical of their attacks on McCarthyism was the statement in their "Draft Resolution on the Political Situation in America" published in September 1954, about the time the career of the Wisconsin senator reached its peak. The party wrote at that time that "as a product of the witch-hunt, McCarthyism continues to set the pace for the hysteria, but it is more than a witch-hunting excrement of the capitalist state apparatus. It is a native American fascist movement in the early stage of formation. Having stepped out on the political arena as the murderous foe of the working class, it will not be subdued or contained by the old capitalist parties, even though they take fright, or by the well-meaning liberals or by any other force except the working class itself."³ Not long after this, Senator McCarthy was in fact censured by the Senate for his behavior during the so-called Army-McCarthy hearings.

In the face of the prosecution of most of the top leaders of the Communist Party under the Smith Act the Socialist Workers Party offered the *CP* its support. The Trotskyites took this position in spite of the fact that several years before the Stalinists had cheered on the federal authorities in their prosecution of the Trotskyists under the same legislation.

Soon after the first indictments against Communist Party leaders in 1949 James Cannon addressed a protest meeting in New York City, explaining the *SWP*'s position. He noted that "this is not a criminal trial of

alleged actions in violation of definite constitutional laws. This is a political trial. The freedom to 'advocate' any doctrine, including revolution, is basic to free speech and democracy. This trial strikes at the very roots of these democratic rights of all workers' organizations."⁴

A bit later, Cannon added that "if the precedent established in our case is reinforced by another conviction in this case of the Stalinists, and sanctioned by public opinion until it becomes accepted as custom, the traditional freedoms which the workers movement needs for enlightened advancement will yield to new encroachments all along the line. The ominous trend toward thought control under a police state will be greatly accelerated."⁵

In spite of the *SWP*'s support of the Communists being prosecuted, the Stalinists in no way reciprocated. They did not even answer overtures from the Socialist Workers Party proposing a united front between the two groups and others to fight prosecutions under the Act.⁶

The Cochranite Split

Origins of the Cochranite Split

The reactionary atmosphere of the early 1950s may have frightened away some of the more timid members of the Socialist Workers Party and may have discouraged other people from joining such a "subversive" group. However, the negative impact on the *SWP* of the official and unofficial anti-radical phobia was nowhere near as great as was the split which took place in 1953. This was the most serious schism since the Shachtmanite break in 1940, the gravest the *SWP* was to suffer between 1940 and the early 1980s. In some respects this split was even more serious than that of the Shachtmanites because it largely deprived the *SWP* of its base in organized labor.

What came to be known as the "Cochranites" consisted, in fact, of at least two groups

which had joined together to fight the majority of the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party. One of these was made up principally of trade union cadres in the Middle West, particularly in Michigan and Ohio, as well as some people from the West Coast. The other element was led by George Clarke and Milton Zaslow (Mike Bartell) and was centered in New York City. Although there was coincidence in the outlook and inclination of these two oppositionist elements, they were two distinct groups, and the starting point of their dissidence with the majority was distinctly different.

As the factional dispute developed, most of the controversy in the factional documents of both the majority and the minority tended to focus on the issues raised by the Clarke-Zaslow group. However, in many ways the criticisms of the swp and of Trotskyism in general by the Cochran trade unionist contingent were more fundamental, both as challenges to the doctrines of the Fourth International and in terms of their representing the outlook of most of the party's leading trade unionists who, when they finally abandoned the swp, took most of its remaining working-class cadres with them.

The Cochranite Trade Unionists

The Cochranite trade unionists included most of the swp leaders in the United Auto Workers in Flint and Detroit as well as autoworkers and others in the Toledo and Cleveland areas; the party people in the United Rubber Workers in and around Akron; and Harry Braverman and others active in the United Steel Workers in the Youngstown area. They were all members of the Ohio/Michigan District of the Socialist Workers Party. As fellow Trotskyists active in the labor movement in the same general part of the country, they had developed more or less close contacts with one another during and right after World War II. However, it was not until 1949 that they began to function as a "tendency" within the party.⁷

By that time Bert Cochran, who during

and right after the war was chairman of the Trade Union Committee of the swp, had come to the conclusion that a split in the party was inevitable. He had come to feel that it was necessary for the swp to break out of being a sect, to form a wider organization, without narrow ideological doctrines in which one was required to believe. At the same time he had become convinced that it would not be possible to have really meaningful discussions, let alone debates, within the swp on the kinds of issues he wanted to raise. Nor did Cochran have any illusions that he and his friends would be able to capture the swp, the hold of Cannon and his associates on the party apparatus being too strong for that.⁸

Although the Cochranites had developed their orientation by 1949, it was several years before the split in the swp developed. It came about as the culmination of a number of incidents and controversies.

In many ways the growing disenchantment of the Cochranite labor group with Cannon and other principal swp figures was quite unexpected and must have been particularly disheartening for Cannon himself. Until the schism began to develop, the trade union group around Bert Cochran had been among the most loyal supporters of the party leadership, and Cochran had the reputation of being the strongest "Cannonite" of them all.⁹

The first clash came in 1948. It originated in Akron, where Jules Geller, the principal Trotskyist among the rubber workers, sought party permission to make an alliance with the Stalinists in the United Rubber Workers to resist the purge of cpers being undertaken by the union's right wing. Geller and others felt that once the Stalinists had been purged, the Trotskyists would be next: he also felt that the Trotskyists, with their strength mainly in the Akron area, and the Stalinists, with influence in smaller locals in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut, stood a good chance of defeating the efforts of those trying to purge the Stalinists.

Geller and others wanted to have the party

adopt a general policy of alliance with the Communists in those CIO unions, including the UAW and National Maritime Workers in which union leaders were moving against the Stalinists. This proposal was denounced as "softness towards Stalinism" and was rejected, although in the particular case of the United Rubber Workers Geller was allowed to work with the Stalinists. Subsequently, the party also allowed UAW Trotskyist unionists to work with the R. J. Thomas's Communist Party faction against the efforts of Walter Reuther to remove them from union leadership.

Meanwhile, the Cochranites were beginning to have serious doubts both about the general political orientation of the SWP and the fundamental nature of the party. They began to argue that the SWP should give up the perspective of being a vanguard party which in the immediate future was going to lead U.S. workers in revolution and become instead an educational group, trying both to educate themselves and the workers. Increasingly, they felt that the SWP had become a sect. They came to feel that the vanguard party/democratic centralism concept, although it might have been appropriate at one time in czarist Russia, was not appropriate in the democratic atmosphere of the United States. Here, they felt, there was need for an open party which would study the real situation in this country and the world.

In retrospect, the Cochranite trade unionists began to have regrets that they had not supported the position of Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow in the immediate postwar period. The Cochranites became convinced that Goldman and Morrow, in their criticism of the apocalyptic viewpoint concerning impending world economic depression and very proximate revolution in the United States which had been adopted by the SWP in 1946, had been correct. They came to regard the expulsion of the Goldman/Morrow group as having confirmed the evolution of the SWP into a sect which had begun with the expulsion of the Shachtmanites in

1940. They questioned what they came to see as a purely mechanical application of Marx's ideas to the mid-twentieth century United States. Although they in no sense repudiated Marx, they increasingly called for a restudy of his ideas to determine which ones were still valid, and which were not applicable sixty-five years after his death.

On a tactical level, the Cochranite labor people had strong disagreements with the majority of the party leadership, and it was perhaps here that their coincidence with the Clarke-Zaslow group was closest. The Cochran tendency felt that the SWP ought to orient its attention more generally toward those in and around the Communist Party. They had concluded that there were quite a few Stalinists, particularly among their trade unionists, who were disgusted with the CP's frequent changes in line and were willing to discuss new ideas. The SWP trade unionists concluded that the best recruiting ground for the party was to be found among the labor people in the Communist Party and its periphery. But the Socialist Workers Party leadership rejected this tactic as being "soft on Stalinism."¹⁰

The Clarke-Zaslow Tendency

In any case, the Cochranites needed allies in their growing conflict with the Cannonites. Although Cannon denounced their alliance with the Clarke-Zaslow group as being "unprincipled," Cochran certainly did not consider it as such. Both groups consisted of veterans of the movement, they had certain common objections to the Cannon leadership, and although they had differing perspectives on a number of issues Cochran did not see anything "unprincipled" in their forming a bloc against that leadership.¹¹

By the early 1950s the Cochranite trade unionists had joined forces within the party with George Clarke, backed by Milton Zaslow, at that point the Organizer of the SWP local in New York City. Clarke had for several years been the SWP's representative on the International Secretariat of the Fourth

International. In that capacity he had become very friendly, both personally and politically with Michel Pablo, the secretary of the International. It was through this connection that the Fourth International ultimately became involved in the 1953 split in the Socialist Workers Party.

Clarke had been the SWP's "fraternal delegate" to the Third World Congress of the Fourth International in 1951. In that capacity he had been commissioned by the SWP leadership to suggest certain amendments accepted by the SWP Political Committee to a proposed document circulated before the meeting, on "International Perspectives." However, instead of doing so, Clarke reported that he had burned the document from the SWP because he was "ashamed" to present it to the Congress.¹²

Clarke's action seems not to have aroused very great repercussions within the SWP at the time. Subsequently, when he returned to the United States shortly after the Third World Congress, he began to indicate that he had differences with the positions of the majority of the SWP leadership. These differences were significant for two reasons. First, they represented important alterations of the Trotskyist position on the nature of the Soviet Union and the Stalinist movement. Second, in presenting them Clarke and his friends claimed—as it turned out, with some justification—that they were reflecting the ideas of Michel Pablo and the International Secretariat of the Fourth International. As a consequence, Pablo was brought directly into the internal conflict in the SWP, and the split proved to be but a prelude to the split in the Fourth International.

We deal elsewhere with the split in the International. Here it is sufficient to note the major positions put forth by Clarke within the SWP. The pressure of events, he argued, had resulted in the masses forcing the Stalinist leadership in the Soviet Union and other Stalinist-controlled countries to adopt a more revolutionary position. Instead, therefore, of being the major impedi-

ment to revolution, the Stalinists had been forced to become revolutionary. They had in fact carried through revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe, establishing workers states' there, however distorted by their ruling bureaucracies, and had carried out new revolutions in China, North Korea, and elsewhere.

Clarke, Zaslow-Bartell, and their associates found confirmation for their arguments in events following Stalin's death. At that point the Stalinist leadership was forced by the masses to make fundamental changes in the economy to improve living standards, they argued. In East Germany, in the face of the uprisings of June 1953, the Stalinists reacted by combining extensive concessions with the action of Soviet troops against the rebels instead of relying only on brute force, as in the past. As a consequence, Clarke suggested that the classical Trotskyist perspective with regard to the Soviet Union should be altered. Instead of continuing to insist that only a political revolution in the USSR would end the deformation of the Soviet workers' state, the Trotskyists must admit the possibility that the end of bureaucratic control of the Soviet Union might come either through political revolution, a series of continuing reformist concessions by leaders of the CPSU, "or a combination of the two." In terms of practical Trotskyist policy in the United States, Clarke, Zaslow-Bartell and others argued that the changing situation within the Stalinist ranks and the reactionary atmosphere of general U.S. politics, called for a change in orientation. The SWP should concentrate its attention largely on those who were already radicalized, which in practical terms meant those in the Communist Party and its periphery.¹³

The Majority Group

If the minority opposition in the 1952-53 factional struggle in the SWP was made up of two more or less clearly defined groups, the majority was even more heterogeneous.

After short initial hesitation, the leadership in the majority was taken by James Cannon, who early in the struggle had moved to California from New York. Associated with him from the beginning was a group led by Murry Weiss, consisting in large part of young people recruited into the party right after World War II.¹⁴

In New York much of the struggle was carried on by Joseph Hansen, George Novack, Morris Stein, and George Breitman, men a generation younger than Cannon who had risen to leadership in the SWP in the 1940s. The first three, in particular, carried on much of the polemicizing with Clarke and Zaslow as well as conducting the factional fight in the key New York Local of the party, where Zaslow was at first in control of the party apparatus.¹⁵

Apparently one group which at first hesitated in the dispute but finally joined the majority was the element led by Farrell Dobbs, the former Minnesota teamster union leader. He perhaps felt some sympathy for the fellow trade unionists in the Cochranite group and was anxious to prevent a split with them. Subsequent to Dobbs's joining forces with Cannon in the struggle, the latter wrote Vincent Dunne that Dobbs "thought, it seems, we were hell-bent on organizing a factional fight in the party without consulting him and before the party members, or even a considerable section of the leading cadre, were convinced of the depth and seriousness of the conflict. He said he had not intended his memorandum to the PC as a declaration of political neutrality—as we told him frankly we had interpreted it—but only as a means of slowing down the *organizational* side of the internal conflict."¹⁶

The majority, or its principal spokesmen—Cannon, Hansen, Novack—relied principally on reiteration of the classic Trotskyist position to rebut the minority. They continued to insist that the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and elsewhere constituted the major impediment to

the spread of the world revolution because of their desire to compromise with "imperialism." They also continued to insist that the only way in which the Stalinist bureaucracy would be ousted from control of the USSR and other degenerated and deformed workers' states would be through political revolution as Trotsky had insisted almost two decades earlier.

Progress of the Schism

Although there had been some jousting between the two sides even before then, the factional struggle broke out in earnest at the beginning of 1953. Organizer Zaslow-Bartell submitted a document entitled "Report and Tasks" to the New York Local for discussion in connection with the local's forthcoming convention. He summarized his position by noting that "the changes in our general approach here in New York can be summed up as follows: we shifted the axis of our activities from the general mass of politically uninitiated workers to a narrower but more selective audience of left-wing groups, politically minded workers and intellectuals, and student youth; from expansion of our organization and activities to retrenchment and more modest tasks."¹⁷

At that time, Joseph Hansen reported that "Cochran, Clarke, Bartell and Frankel [Harry Braverman] are functioning as a common faction under Cochran's leadership. Up to this point there is only one proposition to which they have agreed among themselves. This is the proposal that the party's activities and resources be channelized into propaganda work. They want a committee set up to devote full time to applying Marxism to the American scene."¹⁸

This report set off a vigorous if not violent discussion, not only in New York City but throughout the SWP. In May 1953 a plenum of the National Committee agreed upon a truce. As Cannon subsequently described it, "That proposal, which we offered to them and which they finally accepted, was noth-

ing new ... that is, that they remain in the party and retain all normal rights; they could have a limited discussion after the Convention in the magazine; they could have representation on the leading bodies, according to their strength—on the condition that they accept the decisions of the Convention and remain loyal." He added that "the resolution ... placed no restrictions on further discussion."¹⁹

However, difficulties arose following the May Plenum as representatives of both sides reported back to local units of the party. Relations became increasingly tense, as it became clearer that the two factions had greatly different points of view. A small incident reflects the depth of the chasm which had developed between the Cochranites and the majority of the SWP leadership. Jules Geller, one of the Cochranite leaders, had been a particularly close friend of George Novack, one of the principal spokesmen for the majority point of view. At one point, not long before the final split of the Cochranites from the party, Novack came to visit Geller, seeking to bridge the gap between them. After some preliminary discussion Novack put the question, "Do you still believe that the SWP is destined to lead the revolution in the United States?" When Geller answered in the negative, Novack commented that "there is nothing left to discuss." Years later, Geller's opinion was that that indeed had been the case.²⁰

In August 1953 the minority lost control of the party apparatus in New York City at a city convention.²¹ Finally, at the end of October the minority "provoked" its expulsion from the SWP. They organized a boycott of a celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the expulsion of Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern from the Communist Party and the establishment of the Trotskyist movement in the United States, which "coincided in New York with the wind-up rally in our election campaign—the best we ever had," according to Cannon. As a consequence of that action, a few days later the

Twenty-fifth Anniversary Plenum of the SWP voted to suspend all minority members of the National Committee. They could win reinstatement, the resolution said, if "the boycott of our 25th Anniversary celebration was disavowed."²² The dissidents did not ask for reinstatement.

Assessment of the Cochranite Split

Several questions are posed by the Cochranite split in the SWP. One of these concerns whether the schism was over issues of principle. David Herreshoff, who broke from the SWP with the Cochranites, writing a quarter of a century later to one of the editors of the SWP weekly *The Militant*, commented that "the split of 1963 was between revolutionists and was therefore unprincipled. It was not, as you wildly assert, a split between revolutionists on the one side and Compersite unionists on the other." Later in the same letter, he added that "the split of 1953 was unprincipled and perhaps avoidable."²³

This analysis seems somewhat doubtful. Both elements which made up the "Cochranite" faction—Clarke and Zaslow, on the one hand, and the trade unionists around Cochran, on the other—had fundamental disagreements with the Cannonite leadership. Clarke and Zaslow largely accepted "Pabloism," that is, the belief that conditions had changed so as to make it possible for the Stalinist parties once more to become "revolutionary" and that it therefore behooved the Trotskyist to work within the Stalinist milieu and, if possible, within the Stalinist parties themselves. On the other hand, the dissidence of Cochran and his immediate allies was even more profound. They had developed severe doubts about the very nature of the Trotskyist movement, the appropriateness of the Bolshevik type of revolutionary organization in the American context, and the role of the Fourth International as the "party of the world revolution." It is hard to see how either of these elements of the opposition could ultimately have

compromised with the official Trotskyist movement.

A second question concerns the significance of the split for the Socialist Workers Party and generally for Trotskyism in the United States. There seems little doubt that the defection of the Cochranites was an exceedingly severe blow for the U.S. Trotskyist movement, probably a more significant one than the somewhat larger split of 1940.

To start with, the Cochranites took with them an estimated 25 percent of the SWP's membership. Even more important was the nature of those who defected. David Herreshoff has written the author that "the basic support for Cochran in the SWP was in the party fractions in auto, steel and rubber. After the split the SWP had to rebuild its organization in Michigan practically from scratch. Until their turn towards industrial colonization about three years ago the SWP tended to concentrate their efforts on social movements which had their main strength outside the factories."²⁴

Furthermore, the victory of the majority in the 1953 struggle did not preclude further struggles within the party. Herreshoff wrote to Frank Lovell that the majority in 1953 "agreed . . . on the cockeyed notion that the country was entering a class confrontation between fascism on the march and the proletariat. . . . Events quickly demonstrated the error of the prognosis . . . the bloc of the victors proceeded to fall apart. Weiss, Swabeck, Schultz, Marcy, Stein, Bolden, Fraser, Kay went their separate ways. The SWP barely made it into the '60s."²⁵

The third issue raised by the Cochranite split was its effect on the Fourth International. There can be little doubt about the fact that it was the close association of the Cochranites, particularly Clarke, with the International Secretariat (IS), headed by Pablo which finally convinced Cannon and others, who had first rejected the suggestion when made by leaders of other member parties, that "Pabloism" was a reality, and was leading the Fourth International in a funda-

mentally revisionist direction which the SWP leaders could not accept.

Later History of the Cochranites

Once outside the Socialist Workers Party, most of the Cochranites organized as the Socialist Union. They began to publish *The American Socialist*. It sought to be a periodical open to people of widely different orientations. Although most of the articles were written by members of the group, among the outside contributors were Michael Harrington, then the youth leader of the Shachtmanites, and W. E. B. DuBois, the black leader who was on his way toward affiliating with the Communist Party.²⁶

Although the minority had the support of the Fourth International leadership, and of Michel Pablo personally, in their factional fight "within three or four months the Socialist Union broke with the IS. No sooner had the split occurred than the IS tried to patch things up between themselves, the SWP, and the Cochranites. Neither the SWP nor the Cochranites were in a mood for reconciliation. We regarded the SWP as hopelessly sectarian, the new SLP, we called it; the SWP saw us as a combination of capitulators to Stalinism and to the Reuther wing of the CIO officialdom."²⁷

When reconciliation among the Cannonites, Cochranites, and Pablo became clearly impossible, Pablo proposed to Cochran that the Socialist Union organize as the U.S. Section of the International Secretariat faction of the Fourth International. However, Cochran and most of the other leaders of the Socialist Union rejected this idea, viewing it as being merely the reestablishment of the kind of sect they had eschewed in breaking with the SWP. The Socialist Union never became a part of the Pabloite faction of the Fourth International.²⁸

The Cochranites came to concentrate most of their attention on publishing their periodical. However, David Herreshoff has noted that "its primary constituency was in

the SWP's CIO fractions. The opportunities for left activity in the unions was declining in those years as was the audience for Marxist ideas. The group was vulnerable to demoralization in discouraging conditions because it lacked the sectarian conviction that history had ordained it to lead the revolution.²⁹

At the time of the upheaval in the Communist Party resulting from Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the revolt in Hungary in 1956, the Socialist Union at first saw an opportunity for bringing into its ranks those who had broken with the CPUSA. Cochran had extensive conversations with Joseph Starobin and John Gates, two of the principal Communist Party dissenters. However, because of a combination of circumstances, including still-lingering prejudices of the Communist dissidents against Trotskyists or even ex-Trotskyists, nothing came of these negotiations.³⁰

In 1957 the Socialist Union suffered a split. In New York City a group led by Zaslav and Irving Beinlin broke away to join forces with the remnants of the American Labor Party and the group around *The Guardian*, and for a while Beinlin became editor of *The Guardian*. At this time George Clarke also broke with the Socialist Union. The major significance of the split-off of the Clarke-Zaslav elements was that it deprived the Socialist Union and *The American Socialist* of important financial resources.³¹

Meanwhile, most of the work of putting out *The American Socialist* fell on Cochran, Jules Geller, and Harry Braverman. The last two became increasingly unhappy with Cochran's editorials and other writings, at one point accusing him of becoming "another Walter Lippmann" merely commenting on events without interpreting them in a Socialist fashion. At the same time Braverman and Geller had developed increasingly close relations with the group which put out *Monthly Review*, led by Paul Sweezy and

Leo Huberman. They felt that Sweezy and Huberman, although coming out of the periphery of the Communist Party, were raising the same kinds of questions concerning the adaptation of Marxist ideas to the U.S. scene as were those people involved in *The American Socialist*. As a consequence, it was decided in the fall of 1959 to dissolve the Socialist Union and suspend publication of *The American Socialist*.³²

SWP Electoral Activity

During the 1950s the Socialist Workers Party began to engage on a substantial scale in a kind of political activity in which the Trotskyists had participated very little. This was the running of candidates in general elections, both on the presidential level and in states and localities where they had a sufficient membership to launch what they considered effective campaigns.

Previous to the 1950s the Trotskyists had only occasionally run nominees for public office. One instance which we have noted was the candidacy of Grace Carlson for senator in Minnesota in 1940. At that time the new SWP had a relatively large following in the state, principally based on their influence in the teamsters and the Minneapolis labor movement.

In 1958 Cannon explained in a speech in Los Angeles why the SWP had begun running candidates wherever this was feasible. He noted that the job of the party was to "speak up for Socialism" and that "the best time of all—the most fruitful time to explain socialism—is during election campaigns, when public interest is highest and we stand the best chance to get a hearing. The capitalist class rules this country in a complicated way, through the machinery of bourgeois democracy. They can't shut off all avenues of public communication, even to minority parties—although they try their best."

Cannon maintained that "the Socialist Workers Party, even with its limited forces, has demonstrated in these recent years how

we can get through cracks in the wall and compel them to give us access to TV and radio audiences and to carry notices in the newspapers. We get a greater hearing for the ideas of socialism in the few months of the election campaign than in all of the rest of the time put together. This makes every election campaign a socialist success." The SWP leader concluded, "The main purpose of participating in elections, as a socialist organization or as a coalition of socialist organizations is to take full advantage of the expanded opportunity to make socialist propaganda . . . more people will be listening than at any time in recent decades."³³

George Breitman has written that "during the 1950s electoral activity was an important arena for the SWP especially because McCarthyism and the cold war isolation shut off so many other arenas. In addition to presidential elections there were SWP candidates for congress, state and local offices in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, Washington, California, Minnesota (just to mention places I recall from memory). In 1952 there was Farrell Dobbs for president and Myra Tanner Weiss for vice president. They also ran for those posts in 1956 and 1960."³⁴

The SWP and the Events of 1956

During 1956 a series of events took place which greatly heartened SWP leaders and members. The first was the speech by Nikita Khrushchev to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in March in which he denounced Stalin in a way that only Stalin's worst enemies—including the Trotskyists—had done theretofore. Khrushchev's speech was followed some six months later by the uprisings in Poland and Hungary. Finally, all of these events provoked the beginning of the most serious crisis in the U.S. Communist Party since the fall of Jay Lovestone in 1929.

In addition to giving new encouragement to the Trotskyists these events seemed to

confirm everything that they had been saying for almost thirty years. They caused the SWP leaders to alter, at least for a time, some of the analysis and dogma which had been standard since the early 1930s. Finally, the split in the Communist Party seemed to open up new political possibilities for the SWP.

A few weeks after the CPSU Twentieth Congress Cannon gave a speech in Los Angeles in which he explained his interpretation of Khrushchev's revelations. He asked the question, "Why do these bureaucrats speak out now, three years after the death of Stalin, and begin to tell a part of the truth about that horrible regime? Is it because they have suddenly turned honest and are no longer afraid?"

Cannon answered his second question by saying that "there have been some concessions and some reforms—no question about that—but there has been no basic change in the bureaucratic regime of special privileges for a minority and hard times for the majority established under Stalin. The bureaucracy has all the privileges. The workers have no rights and no freedom and anybody who says they do, lies. There is no such thing as a free worker in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev any more than there was under Stalin."

Cannon added that "the workers have to get that freedom for themselves," and then went on to give his explanation for Khrushchev's speech: "The irresistible pressure of the Soviet workers was the power behind the Twentieth Congress. That, comrades, is the key to an understanding of what is taking place. The bureaucrats assembled at that congress had had warning signals of a coming storm, and they began to respond to these signals. The uprising of the East German workers in June 1953, that was followed a month later by a general strike of the Vorkuta slave-labor camp—these tremendous actions . . . gave notice of a coming revolutionary storm, just as the general strike movement of the Russian workers in

1905 gave notice of the first revolution against the Czar.³⁵

Thus, the swp leaders saw the events of the Twentieth Congress as a confirmation of their longheld dogma that the Soviet workers would inevitably rise in political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy. This line of reasoning seemed still further confirmed by the uprisings in Hungary and Poland (particularly in Hungary) in October–November 1956.

Murry Weiss well stated the position of the swp: "With the revelations emanating from the Twentieth Congress and the revolutionary ferment in Eastern Europe—Poznań in June 1956, the October days in Poland, the October–November insurrection in Hungary—the bureaucratic equilibrium of the Communist parties throughout the world was irreparably disrupted. . . . In our opinion the revolutionary upsurge of the Soviet orbit working class is in its first stages. The struggle is bound to spread and become more intense. The working class and youth in the Soviet Union itself are heading for open mass struggle. The goal of this struggle is the overthrow of the Soviet bureaucracy and the restoration of workers democracy on the foundations of the socialized property forms established by the October 1917 revolution."³⁶

"Regroupment"

The disintegration of the U.S. Communist Party which resulted from the events of 1956 seemed to the swp leaders to give Trotskyism a new chance to recruit from the ranks of the Stalinists and their periphery. They gave the name "regroupment" to this effort, and it lasted for about two years.

The first indication of dissension within the Communist Party became apparent when the *Daily Worker*, then edited by John Gates, opened its pages to comments and criticisms of what had happened and was continuing to happen in 1956. The result was an outpouring of criticisms of Stalin-

ism, the Soviet and East European regimes, and other things which the Communist Party had until then held to be sacrosanct. These exchanges had several results. Some of the intellectuals who had been in or around the Communist Party broke away, the most notable figure to do so being the novelist Howard Fast. Another effect was the launching of a factional fight within the Communist Party, the first one in more than a quarter of a century, between the dissident group around John Gates and the hard-liners headed by William Z. Foster.

Most of the dissident leaders were people who had been the leaders of the Young Communist League in the 1930s. They controlled not only the *Daily Worker* but the New York State party organization. However, after several months of conflict the Fosterites won out, recapturing control of the party in New York and suppressing the *Daily Worker* when they could not gain control of it.

Those who left the Communist Party in 1956–57 did not form a separate organization. For several years they stayed unaffiliated, making contacts with the various other left-wing organizations and parties, but in most cases not joining any of them. It was these people whom the swp leaders were particularly anxious to gather into their ranks, as well as people who had been in the periphery of the Communist Party—in Henry Wallace's Progressive Party and the American Labor Party in New York, and who were equally disillusioned in the Stalinism with which they had worked so long.

When the suggestion of "regroupment" was first put forward, the Socialist Workers Party sought any realignment on the left which might give rise to a new party including itself and other elements which might be attracted to it, to be brought about on a "principled" basis. A resolution launching the policy of seeking regroupment published by the National Committee of the swp on January 11, 1957, noted that "two different ways of proceeding are counterposed:

(1) Shall we first attempt a general unification, leaving the discussion and clarification of programmatic questions for a later time? Or (2) shall we first explore the different views, clarify the various positions, and try to reach agreement and unification on at least the minimum fundamentals? It seems to us that the latter procedure is preferable and that the serious elements taking part in the discussion will agree that programmatic issues have to be considered and clarified before durable organizational conclusions can be reached."³⁷

At a meeting in Los Angeles on March 1, 1958, Cannon stated the objective which he and other SWP leaders had in mind in their "regroupment" campaign. He said that "the basic aim in rebuilding for the future . . . the basic aim for which we are all striving, is to regroup the scattered socialist forces, and eventually to get all honest socialists together in one common party organization." He added, "that can't be done in a day. The experience of the last two years shows that it will take time. We'll have to take the process of collaboration and unification in stages, one step at a time."³⁸

In the previous year Cannon had defined the limits within which the SWP was seeking "regroupment." He noted that "I say we will not put the socialist movement of this country on the right track and restore its rightful appeal to the best sentiments of the working class of this country and above all to the young, until we begin to call socialism by its right names as the great teachers did. Until we make it clear that we stand for an ever-expanding workers' democracy as the only road to socialism. Until we root out every vestige of Stalinist perversion and corruption of the meaning of socialism and democracy. . . ."³⁹

Cannon went on to claim that "the privileged bureaucratic caste everywhere is the most formidable obstacle to democracy and socialism. The struggle of the working class in both sections of the now-divided world has become, in the most profound meaning

of the term, a struggle against the usurping privileged bureaucracy. In the Soviet Union, it is a struggle to restore the genuine workers' democracy established by the revolution of 1917." Therefore, he argued, "There is no sense in talking about regroupment with people who don't agree on that, on defense and support of the Soviet workers against the Soviet bureaucrats."

However, he noted that "in the United States, the struggle for workers' democracy is preeminently a struggle of the rank and file to gain democratic control of their own organizations. . . . No party in this country has a right to call itself socialist unless it stands foursquare for the rank-and-file workers of the United States against the bureaucrats." Cannon concluded that "in my opinion, effective and principled regroupment of socialist forces requires full agreement on these two points. That is the necessary starting point."⁴⁰

Some months earlier, Farrell Dobbs, national secretary of the SWP, had stated a somewhat long list of "positions basic to a revolutionary-socialist program" which should serve as the basis of regroupment. These positions were

Defense of the workers' states and the colonial revolution against imperialism. Support to the workers' political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet sphere. Formation of an independent labor party in opposition to the capitalist parties. . . . "A class struggle policy in the unions and a working class policy in support of the Negro struggle for civil rights. Defense of civil liberties for all, including members of the Communist Party. Build a revolutionary-socialist party based on class struggle principles."⁴¹

Regroupment in New York

This "regroupment" was pushed most energetically, and for a time successfully, in

New York State. The effort centered on the general election of 1958. It started when the Socialist Workers Party took out an advertisement in the February 3, 1958, issue of *National Guardian*, until then a Stalinist fellow-traveling weekly. This advertisement proposed a "united socialist ticket for 1958."

The SWP suggested five points as the basis for such a campaign. The first stated that "socialism offers a realistic alternative to the insane drive towards thermonuclear war which the two parties of Big Business have been conducting. . . ." Point two argued that "socialism offers the only permanent solution to the problem of capitalist depression. . . ." The third argument was that "socialism can realize the full equality and brotherhood of all races and nationalities. . . ." The fourth point suggested by the SWP proved to be the most controversial one, that "socialism stands for the deepening and extension of democracy. Repeal the witch-hunt legislation at home and free such political prisoners as Morton Sobell, Gil Green, Henry Winston and Irving Potash. For political freedom throughout the Soviet bloc. End the ballot restrictions on minority parties in the United States." Finally, the SWP called for a united socialist platform and stated that "socialists favor the building of a labor party based on the unions and would urge a party to adopt a socialist program. . . . Against the support of capitalist parties and candidates, for independent political action."⁴²

As a result of this overture, a United Independent-Socialist Conference was finally held in New York City from June 13-15, 1958. Three elements were represented: the SWP, the Communist Party, and the ex-Stalinist fellow travelers grouped around the *National Guardian*. Sam Bottone, writing in the Shachtmanite periodical *Labor Action*, estimated that in the key vote of the meeting, one hundred SWP'ers participated, sixty from the Communist Party, and eighty from those associated with the *National Guardian*.

The major issue of the meeting was whether to run a full slate of state candidates, five in all, or just to run a symbolic nominee for the Senate. The Trotskyists favored a full slate, hoping that the new group's candidate for governor might get the 50,000 votes necessary according to state law to give it official recognition as a party. The Communists favored a symbolic "peace" candidate for senator, and no other nominees. In a showdown, the vote was 154 for a full slate against sixty-one for a single candidacy.

There was no full discussion of a platform for the new United Independent Socialist Party. A "draft" of the platform was presented by the steering committee, with no amendments being allowed from the floor. It was agreed that some modifications might be made later by a "continuations committee" elected by the conference.

Sam Bottone commented on the platform that it "represents a retreat from and inadequate minimal statement of the SWP in its call for a United Socialist Ticket in the 1958 Elections. . . . There is included a statement calling for 'political freedom throughout the Soviet bloc.' " However, no such statement appeared in the program.

The Socialist Workers Party was not represented at the head of the new group's ticket. The candidate for senator was Corliss Lamont, a very close fellow traveler of the Communist Party, and the nominee for governor was John McManus of the *National Guardian*.⁴³

The failure to include any criticism of the Soviet Union in the platform caused some dissension in Trotskyist ranks during the campaign. It provoked the resignation from the State Campaign Committee of Richard DeHaan, ex-chairman of the new youth group associated with the SWP, the Young Socialist Alliance. In his statement of resignation he complained that "the platform and ideological character of the ISP do not differ materially from those of the CP and ALP in years past. The platform carries not

the least word suggesting anything but elation over the barbarous Stalinist policies of past and present. . . ."⁴⁴

However, the concessions of the Independent Socialist Party to the Stalinists did not save the Trotskyists from attacks by the Communist Party. On November 2, 1958, *The Worker*, the weekly successor to the *Daily Worker*, complained that "the Trotskyites, consciously, and some other people mistakenly, have narrowed the fight for peace to the acceptance of a full socialist ticket. It is an extremely unfortunate and harmful development that the peace question is being turned into a narrow partisan issue to help win 50,000 votes for its gubernatorial candidate Jack McManus, rather than a mass people's peace vote for Dr. Corliss Lamont for the U.S. Senate." The writer, William Albertson, added, "This policy of narrowing peace for an acceptance of socialism flows logically from the Trotskyite line," and that "the swpers want a new socialist party which would be dominated by the Trotskyites and would become a new anti-Soviet agency to mislead people ready to move in the direction of socialism and of the Communist Party."⁴⁵

The 1958 electoral effort provided few lasting results. The United Independent Socialist Committee, the "continuations committee" of the June 1958 conference, finally announced its dissolution on October 29, 1959, "because of substantial differences over electoral policy in 1960."

The Young Socialist Alliance

The only really lasting result of the "re-groupment" policy of the SWP after the events of 1966 was the establishment of the Young Socialist Alliance. This development gave the Trotskyists a functioning youth organization for the first time since most of the SWP youth had deserted the party with the Shachtmanites in 1940.

Most of the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party were skeptical, perhaps on the ba-

sis of past experience, about the possibility or advisability of reestablishing a party youth group. However, Myra Tanner Weiss, during a nationwide speaking trip for the party in 1956, became convinced that not only was it necessary but also possible for the SWP to do so. She became one of the major figures in the party who helped foster the establishment of a new Trotskyist youth organization.⁴⁶

Several other events created an atmosphere conducive to the establishment of the new youth group. One of these was the dissolution of the Labor Youth League. This was the youth group of the Communist Party, which was much influenced by the Gatesite wing of the CP in the 1956-57 struggle. It was finally officially dissolved by the Communist Party in 1957.⁴⁷ However, a number of its leaders and members continued to be interested in radical activities and were conducive to merging in the formation of a new youth organization.⁴⁸

Another propitious development for the SWP was the final struggle inside the Shachtmanite Independent Socialist League and its youth affiliate, the Young Socialist League (YSL), over entry of the Shachtmanites into the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation. The majority of the YSL went along with entry, and came in time to form the majority in the SP-SDF youth group, the Young People's Socialist League. However, a minority of the YSL, led by Tim Wohlforth and James Robertson, opposed entry into the YPSL. They urged instead "unity with all socialist youth in an independent movement with a genuinely socialist program." They were finally expelled from the YSL in the fall of 1957, but maintained a separate existence around a newly launched newspaper *Young Socialist*.⁴⁹

Even before the expulsion of the YSL minority, the SWP had organized a small youth group in New York City under the name of American Youth for Socialism (AYS). In May 1957 it sent an open letter to the YSL in which it said that "in our opinion the posi-

tion put forward by the ysl Left-Wing Caucus provides the basis for beginning the long and necessary work of constructing a united revolutionary youth movement in this country. The AYS proposes that we begin the process of youth regroupment by the affiliation of the young members and sympathizers of the Socialist Workers Party to the ysl. . . ."⁵⁰ Although this proposal of the AYS was obviously not accepted by the ysl, when the Left Wing Caucus of that organization was expelled, the ex-Shachtmanite youth did gravitate towards the Socialist Workers Party. Tim Wohlforth, among others, began to write in the periodicals of the SWP. However, it took two and a half years before a new organization finally emerged.

The founding conference of the Young Socialist Alliance met in April 1960 in Philadelphia. It claimed that groups from sixteen college campuses as well as "students in high schools and trade schools and young workers in industry" were represented by seventy-five "regular, alternate and fraternal delegates." Groups from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Berkeley, Seattle, Denver, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Boston, Baltimore, Connecticut, Newark, New York, and Philadelphia attended.

The report on the founding meeting of the ysa in *The Militant* said that "the conference explicitly defined the Marxist program of the Young Socialist Alliance. While it retained and even strengthened all the features of an independent organization of youth with its own unique requirements and tasks in bringing socialist ideas to the new generation, it adopted a stand of 'basic political solidarity, on the principles of revolutionary socialism, with the Socialist Workers party.'" It also noted that "the conference warmly greeted the decision of the Socialist Workers party to run Farrell Dobbs for president and Myra Tanner Weiss for vice president in the 1960 elections and pledged full support to this campaign."

Tim Wohlforth was elected national

chairman of the Young Socialist Alliance and Jim Lembrecht was named its national secretary. Among the adult speakers at the meeting were Otto Nathan, the economist, Dr. Annette T. Rubinstein, who had been candidate for lieutenant governor on the SWP-backed Independent Socialist ticket in New York in 1958, as well as Farrell Dobbs and Myra Tanner Weiss.⁵¹

The Young Socialist Alliance was to prove long-lasting. It was able to take advantage of the New Left wave of the 1960s and at least during some of the 1970s was to be the largest radical youth group in the country.

The Workers World Schism

Near the end of the 1950s the Socialist Workers Party suffered another split which, although nowhere near the consequence of those of the Shachtmanites and Cochranites earlier, did result in the establishment of a small but persistent rival group, the Workers World Party. This was the element in the 1953 majority led by Sam Marcy.

Marcy had for some time been somewhat of a maverick within the SWP. However, it was over the events of 1956 that he and his followers developed fundamental disagreements with the rest of the Socialist Workers Party leadership. He argued that the uprisings in Poland and Hungary were not, as the rest of the SWP leaders saw them, the first expressions of the long yearned for workers' revolts against Stalinist bureaucrats, but rather were counterrevolutionary movements. Marcy and his friends welcomed the reentry of the Soviet army into Hungary.⁵²

By early 1959 the Marcyites were outside the Socialist Workers Party and had founded an organization of their own, the Workers World Party. Its official organ was *Workers World*, the same name as a periodical that James Cannon had edited thirty years before. In an early issue of the newspaper an editorial proclaimed that "We are THE Trotskyists. We stand one hundred percent with all the principled positions of Leon

Trotsky, the most revolutionary communist since Lenin."⁵³

If nothing else, the Workers World Party people were marked by unbounded enthusiasm and optimism. Their outlook was epitomized by a letter to the editor published in the March 18, 1960, issue of *Workers World*. It said that "after attending the Workers World meeting in New York . . . I know socialism is coming. There's no stopping the world revolution! As the Workers World Party reaches out to more workers, the workers all over the world, especially in the colonial countries, are fighting back for freedom. . . . The Workers World Party is the only party which can and will lead the world revolution!"

However, in spite of the early allegiance of the Workers World Party to Trotskyism, it soon wandered from that position. One of its leaders wrote seventeen years after its establishment that "the founding of Workers World Party in 1959 signified the emergence of a tendency in the U.S. that championed all the socialist countries, seeking through its press to educate the most advanced elements here on the earthshaking changes being wrought in that part of the world that had seemed to be mired in social stagnation. In the very first issue of this newspaper (March 1959) a front-page article hailed the Chinese communes, which were being treated as utopian by many on the left. . . ."⁵⁴

Because the Workers World Party soon ceased any pretense of being an orthodox Trotskyist group, we shall not trace its further evolution here. However, in a chapter discussing the various offshoots of Trotskyism in the United States, we shall discuss its later history.

Recapitulation of SWP in the 1950s

On balance, the decade of the 1950s was probably the most difficult one in the history of Trotskyism in the United States. Although he counterbalanced certain words of

optimism against his description of the situation in those years, James Cannon, better perhaps than anyone else, has described the travails through which the Trotskyists had passed. Speaking in 1958, he said that:⁵⁵

Now, we socialists don't need to conceal our own troubles—we have plenty of them. We who have survived the storms of these last terrible years know very well that we have been hurt. . . .

First, there were the terrible reactionary effects on the labor movement, and on all American radicalism and even liberal thought of the Second World War. The cold war that followed it. And the Korean War. The effects were reactionary in all directions.

Then we had to contend with the conservatizing influence of the long, artificially propped-up prosperity, which sapped the strength of American radicalism in all its departments.

And then we had to put up with the devastation and terror of the long witch-hunt, which decimated the ranks of American radicalism and liberalism and all sections of the socialist movement.

And then, last but not least, the socialist movement has been sapped by a moral sickness—the calculated lies and slanders, the suppression of free and independent thought, the violations of class solidarity, the disruption of fraternal relations and free discussion among socialists of different tendencies. All this dirty business has worked to demoralize the movement and to discredit the name of socialism.

We have been hit hard from all sides. . . .

U.S. Trotskyism: The SWP, the YSA, and the New Left Movements in the 1960s

The mass political upheavals of the 1960s provided the Socialist Workers Party and its youth affiliate, the Young Socialist Alliance, with unprecedented opportunities to extend their influence and to grow in membership. The upsurge of the civil rights movement in the early 1960s, the student upheavals and the growing struggle against the Vietnam War, as well as the rebirth of the feminist movement were among the major events of the period. At the same time, the evolution of the Cuban government of Fidel Castro into a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist regime had an important impact on U.S. politics, especially on left-wing activity.

The "orthodox" Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party and the YSA became more or less involved in all of these movements and events. They first threw themselves into the campaign in favor of the Castro regime, in which they played a leading role. Subsequently, they became very much involved in the anti-war struggle, in which they had a significant organizational part. Similarly, they became concerned with the black movement, although in a somewhat peculiar way. As a consequence, the SWP was able to recover from the doldrums of the 1950s and gain more influence and a larger membership than ever before.

However, the 1960s were not without their complications. For one thing, the SWP's orientation during this period was not toward the working class and organized labor but rather toward movements that were basically middle class in membership and leadership. This fact aroused some unhappiness within the party and generated extensive criticism from rival Trotskyist groups.

Furthermore, the positions taken, particularly with regard to the U.S. racial problems, seemed to raise questions about the orthodoxy of the SWP's policies from a Trotskyist point of view. Finally, the party's policies within the international Trotskyist movement were extensively debated and gave rise to a split of some consequence within SWP ranks.

The Cuban Revolution

The Socialist Workers Party greeted Castro's overthrow of Fulgencio Batista's government with the same enthusiasm shown by other radical and even liberal groups. When near the end of 1959 the new Castro regime moved in an avowedly Marxist-Leninist direction, the SWP's enthusiasm intensified.

By July 1960 Joseph Hansen, who became the chief spokesman on Cuban matters for the majority of the SWP leadership was qualifying the Castro regime as a "Workers and Farmers Government" of the kind defined in our Transition Program 'a government independent of the bourgeoisie.'"¹ He expounded on this definition by saying that "by recognizing the new Cuban government as a 'Workers and Farmers Government' we indicate its radical petty-bourgeois background and composition and its origin in a popular mass movement, its tendency to respond to popular pressures for action against the bourgeoisie and their agents, and its capacity, for whatever immediate reasons and with whatever hesitancy, to undertake measures against bourgeois political power and against bourgeois property relations. The extent of those measures is not decisive in determining the nature of the regime. What is decisive is the capacity and the tendency."²

During the latter half of 1960 the Castro regime was drastically radicalized. It first nationalized virtually all U.S.-owned properties in the country, and a few weeks later took over most Cuban-owned means of production and distribution. These measures

brought the swp leaders to modify their definition of the Castro regime and to increase their enthusiasm. On December 23, 1960, the Political Committee of the party adopted a document entitled "Draft Theses on the Cuban Revolution" which for the first time categorized the Castro regime as a "workers state." This document was then ratified at a plenum of the National Committee of the swp on January 14, 1961.

The core statement of the "theses" read:

The blows of these counterrevolutionary forces, in turn compelled the Castro government to resort to increasingly radical measures. . . . These included the establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade, the nationalization of the latifundia, and, in August–October 1960, the virtual expropriation of the American and Cuban capitalist holdings; that is, the key sectors of Cuban industry. These steps necessitated economic planning. This started in the fall of 1959, developed concomitantly with the nationalization of industry and is now firmly established. All these measures were taken with the examples of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and China available for study. Thus, in the final analysis, the overturn in property relations in Cuba is an echo of the October 1917 Revolution in Russia. When the capitalist holdings in the key sectors of the Cuban economy were taken over by the government, Cuba entered the transitional phase of a workers state, although one lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule.³

Joseph Hansen made the report on Cuba for the Political Committee to the January 1961 Plenum. He raised the issue of why the swp had not earlier labeled the Castro government a workers state, saying that "in my opinion the reason for this was the absence of a manifest socialist consciousness on the part of the leadership of that revolution."⁴ However, he continued, "this test of the Cuban revolution, the test in struggle, was passed between the period of August to

October in 1960, three months ago when industries were nationalized throughout the entire island. . . ."

As a consequence of the swp's "conservatism" in waiting for the facts to justify the label of "workers' state," Hansen said that "now the conclusions that we have reached are not speculations, they're not projections, are not based on any political confidence in what the regime down there is going to do. Our characterizations simply reflect the facts, just the facts. The fact that the capitalists have been expropriated in Cuba. The fact that a planned economy has been started there. The fact that a qualitatively different kind of state exists there. No matter what you call these things, they are the facts that everyone has to start with."⁵

Hansen recognized the theoretical problems presented by the fact that a "workers' state" had been established without the previous existence of a revolutionary party. "We're still left with the question how are we to explain this victory in Cuba in the absence of a party like the Socialist Workers Party. Let me explain that. There's no Socialist Workers Party in Cuba. But how can they have a revolution down there in Cuba without the swp? Isn't there great danger involved in this? Doesn't this imply that no party is needed? Can you have a revolution without a party?"⁶

After explaining that the kind of revolutionary party conceived of by the Trotskyists is a worldwide party, Hansen commented that "thus we come to the conclusion that there is a great deal of unevenness in the growth and development of this party. . . . Some countries can forge forward faster than others. In some cases the action can transcend the political consciousness of it. Given this great unevenness in the development of an international party, we have to ask ourselves this question: Does this signify that it is impossible for the masses to overthrow a capitalist power in certain countries until the international party appears in full force and completeness?... The answers are that in certain

countries it is possible. Yugoslavia, China and Cuba. That's the fact sheet."⁷

Throughout the 1960s the Socialist Workers Party continued to give virtually unconditional support to the Castro regime, although offering it "advice" from time to time. Hansen wrote in 1966 that the "*The Militant* has consistently printed the main declarations of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara despite the limited number of pages at its disposal and is a well-known source of truthful information about the Cuban Revolution."⁸

Even the suppression by the Castro regime of the only existing Trotskyist group in the island did not weaken the swp's support for the Castro government. The Cuban group was an affiliate of the Posadas version of the Fourth International, and after it offered criticisms of the failure of the Castro government to establish "soviets" and establish "workers democracy," its publications were suppressed and its leaders were jailed. They were released from prison only after they signed a statement repudiating the Fourth International.⁹

Although at the time of the suppression of the Cuban Partido Obrero Revolucionario the swp did not consider the issue sufficiently grave to weaken their support of the Castro regime, Hansen commented several years later that "it was injurious to the Cuban Revolution to muzzle the Posadas group. . . . was the Cuban Revolution so weak ideologically that it was incapable of answering the arguments of even a Posadas?" Hansen noted that "particularly in the United States . . . the suppression of the Posadas group did injury to Cuba. There were few campuses where the violation of the democratic rights of the Posadas group was not thrown at defenders of the Cuban Revolution. . . ."¹⁰

The Fair Play for Cuba Committee

The attitude of the majority of the swp leadership toward the Cuban Revolution and the

Castro regime played a major role in the split within the party which took place in the mid-1960s. It also was a major matter of contention between the swp and its former allies in the International Committee of the Fourth International and the Socialist Labor League of Great Britain headed by Gerry Healy. However, their work on behalf of the Castro regime gave the swp the first chance in a long while to reach out and win recruits among elements which until then had not been even in the periphery of the Socialist Workers Party.

We deal elsewhere in this volume with the role of the Cuban issue in the internal and international Trotskyist polemics. Here it is sufficient to note the role which the swp played in the early 1960s in defending the cause of the Cuban Revolution outside the ranks of the party and its periphery. The work of defending the Cuban Revolution before public opinion in the United States was undertaken principally by what came to be known as the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. This group was established as the direct result of a reception organized by the Cuban Consulate General in New York City for "friends of Cuba," on April 1, 1960. At that meeting Dra. Berta Plá, cultural attaché of the Consulate General, explained that she was interested in trying to establish some kind of organization of Americans with the principal purpose of telling the truth about Cuba. She also commented that she and others in the Consulate General would certainly quit their jobs and join the opposition if they were convinced that Fidel Castro was a Communist or that he was following the advice of the Communists or that in any way the government was Communist.¹¹

The members of the Socialist Workers Party played a leading role in the work and leadership of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. Tim Wohlforth, who in the early 1960s was one of the leaders of the opposition within the swp, some years later summed up the role of the party in the pro-Castro movement. He wrote that "the pro-

Cuba forces in the United States [the Fair Play for Cuba Committee] were to become the new regroupment arena and the major area for party work. These pro-Cuban forces were essentially the same petty-bourgeois radicals the swp had sought to reach during regroupment. . . . As time passed the pro-Cuban forces began to drift away and those remaining grew increasingly hostile to the swp as Cuba worked closer with the USSR. Finally, the Fair Play group formally dissolved itself in the wake of the Kennedy assassination. But long before this, it had lost its steam." Wohlforth insisted that "out of all this effort the swp did not gain more than a handful of recruits."¹² He might have added that this work in the Fair Play Committee did serve to put the swp in contact with many of the same kind of elements with whom they were to work in other fields, particularly in the anti-Vietnam War movement, and perhaps to some degree in the civil rights movement. It also brought into the party a number of young people who a few years later were to take over the swp leadership.

The SWP View of Its Role in the Cuban Revolution

There is no doubt that the leaders and members of the Socialist Workers Party then and later had an exaggerated view of the importance of their relationship with the Cuban Revolution. They were convinced they were vicariously playing a role in leading "the first socialist revolution in America." This view was well illustrated by Jack Barnes, by then national secretary of the swp (and in the early 1960s a leader of the Young Socialist Alliance), at a meeting celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the victory of the Castro forces, on December 31, 1978. At that gathering, he recalled that "we made a bloc with the Castro team against the Stalinists from the beginning. We did that because the Stalinists have been the number one internal enemy of the Cuban revolution."

Barnes went on to say that "there have been, and are today, two basic wings inside the current Cuban Communist Party: the Castroist wing and the Stalinist wing. We made a bloc with Castro against the Cuban Stalinists in the fight against the bureaucratic course of Anibal Escalante in the early 1960s and later in the conflict with the Stalinists internationally over defense of the Vietnamese revolution and the Cuban leadership's efforts to extend the revolution to Latin America. We learned how to bloc with Castro against the Stalinists in the fight to defend and extend the revolution. And that conflict between the Castroists and the Stalinists is still going on."

Barnes summed up the vicarious participation of the swp in the Cuban Revolution by saying that "we discovered that the real line to be drawn is the line between the revolutionists—meaning Castro and those around him, including us—and the counter-revolutionaries on the other side, including the Stalinists and the so-called 'Third Camp' social democrats."¹³

The Anti-Vietnam War Movement

During the latter half of the 1960s and the early 1970s the Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party concentrated the largest part of their attention and activity on the fight against the war in Vietnam. Julius Jacobson, one-time swp member and former Shachtmanite, writing in 1976, admitted that "the one organization strengthened by the anti-war movement was the Socialist Workers Party."¹⁴

The swp paid relatively little attention to the Vietnam War until the decision of President Lyndon Johnson, soon after his reelection, to greatly intensify the struggle by sending large numbers of United States troops to the battlegrounds. In the party's 1964 platform the only mention of the war was a one-sentence reference in its foreign policy plank, "Stop the 'dirty war' in Vietnam."¹⁵

Fred Feldman has noted that "the antiwar movement traces its origins to the call issued in December 1964 by Students for a Democratic Society for a march on Washington on April 17, 1965 . . . 20,000 persons marched on April 17. A majority of them were college students."¹⁶ He went on to say that "the main burden of antiwar organizing fell on local and national coalitions made up of students, traditional peace groups, radicals, and other forces. They focused on building mass street actions on a united-front basis. . . ."¹⁷

The SWP and Young Socialist Alliance were very active in the fight against the war which began to mushroom early in 1965. At the first convention of the organization established to bring together the scattered local antiwar groups, the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam, they represented the single largest political group there. At that meeting, in November 1965, the SWP-YSA contingent fought for two things which they were to continue to push so long as the anti-Vietnam War struggle continued: concentration on the issue of withdrawal of United States troops from the Vietnam conflict, and openness of the antiwar organizations to people of all political orientations. Aligned against them were Communist Party, Maoist and New Left elements, and their only allies were a small contingent from the Youth Against War and Fascism, the youth group of the Workers World Party. Although the SWP-YSA delegates by no means won everything they wanted from this meeting, they were obviously regarded by delegates of other tendencies as "the ones to beat."¹⁸

In 1966 a new group, the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, was established, and Fred Feldman noted that "this remained the most important student antiwar organization during the next six years."¹⁹ The very anti-SWP periodical *The Campaigner*, published by the so-called National Caucus of Labor Committees, admitted in mid-1970 that "the YSA

faction of the Student Mobilization Committee succeeded in gaining momentary organizational hegemony over the majority of former SDS forces by its 'non-exclusionist' tactical approach to the organization at the Cleveland conference. . . . The YSA, at this juncture, was the only socialist organization with the physical means to secure hegemony over student-radical and related forces. . . ."²⁰

A bit after the establishment of the Student Mobilization Committee, a new umbrella antiwar group was established, the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam ("New Mobe"). David McReynolds said of the New Mobe that it "can be characterized as follows: first, it was a single issue grouping, drawn together by its opposition to the war in Vietnam. . . . Second, it was essentially a single tactic grouping, sticking to mass legal demonstrations, avoiding both political action and civil disobedience. Part of this 'single issue/single tactic' approach was dictated by the fact there never really was a 'Mobe' structure, with offices, paid staff, a publication of its own, etc. The Mobe was simply the creation of a wide range of groups, from the Communist Party to the Catholics, from Quakers to student radicals, that re-created itself each time it called a national rally."²¹

It was the New Mobilization Committee which organized the massive antiwar demonstrations of the late 1960s. In November 1969 it mobilized 250,000 to demonstrate in Washington, and 100,000 in San Francisco, and at the time of the Cambodia invasion of May 1970 it "in less than ten days, assembled a hundred thousand persons in Washington."²²

McReynolds, a Socialist/pacifist, described the Trotskyite tactics within the antiwar movement. He wrote that "for several years the SWP had argued for a single issue movement, partly because it felt a more radical movement would have a narrower base, but also because a bland single-issue movement was an ideal recruiting ground for the

Trotskyists. So long as the peace movement stuck to just one issue, those who became more radical within its ranks, found themselves drawn toward the more radical program of the SWP."

McReynolds added that "the SWP not only opposed the extremist positions of the radical caucus but opposed *any* broadening of the Mobe. As a consequence of these internal strains—the SWP, the radical caucus, and the 'centrist' group—Mobe died in 1970, almost at the instant of its massive demonstration in Washington on May 9."²³

As a result of the breakup of the New Mobilization Committee, three major antiwar groups were formed. One of these was the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC), which David McReynolds said was "almost entirely a creation of the Trotskyists." He added that "they have only one issue—Vietnam. They have only one tactic—mass legal rallies." Speaking of the April 24, 1970, rally against the war, McReynolds said that "because of their genuine ability, not simply because they took the more moderate line, they secured almost the entire establishment as sponsors. . . ."²⁴

The SWP sought to carry out antiwar activity not only among the civilian population but among members of the armed forces as well. For instance, during their 1968 election campaign, in which Fred Halstead was their presidential nominee, "About 115,000 'Letters to GI's' by Fred Halstead were distributed to GI's and antiwar activists in England, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Germany, as well as throughout the United States. On his trip around the world last summer, Halstead talked to GI's in Vietnam and in Germany, and he reported the antiwar feeling among them in his meetings and press conferences when he returned to the United States. He attended the court-martial of Sp/4 Allen Myers at Fort Dix and was thrown off the base for distributing campaign and antiwar literature to GI's."²⁵

As President Nixon's policy of "Vietnamization" of the war progressed, and after the

establishment of the "lottery" draft, the impetus of the antiwar movement declined. Another factor contributing to this was undoubtedly the success of many of the groups which had been most engaged in the antiwar movement in penetrating the organization of the Democratic Party, culminating in the nomination of Senator George McGovern in 1972, thus diverting the attention and energies of these people from concentrating on the antiwar campaign.

The SWP continued to control the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) faction of the antiwar movement so long as it existed. The NPAC held a convention in December 1971, in Cleveland, which was reportedly attended by 1,400 people. The periodical of one of the anti-SWP political groups with representation at that meeting, the International Socialists, reported that "the small size and uninspired atmosphere reflected the most recent anti-war marches on November 6." The same periodical opined that "the decline of the anti-war movement . . . and its failure to overcome its isolation from the labor revolt, pose a grave threat to the future of the struggle against the imperialist war."²⁶

The Black Struggle of the 1960s

The members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance played only a miniscule role, if any, in the major civil rights struggles of the 1960s. They had no visible connection with the organizations built around the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, or with the labor-oriented groups in which A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin figured most prominently. The reasons for this lack of participation in the major organizations conducting the black struggle of the 1960s are probably several. First of all, the SWP's quite limited resources were very largely taken up with first, the campaign on behalf of the Castro regime, and then the struggle against the

Vietnam War. In the second place, they did not approve ideologically either with the nonviolent emphasis of Dr. King and his supporters, or the orientation of the Randolph-Rustin group toward cooperation with established leaders in the organized labor movement.

This lack of participation in the mainstream civil rights movement did not mean that the SWP was oblivious to black concerns and struggle of the period. They indicated their interest, among other ways, by naming a black, Clifton DeBerry, as their candidate for president in 1964, and by their nomination of Paul Boutelle, another black for the vice president in 1968.

Party platforms dealt extensively with problems of the black struggle. That of 1964, for instance, called for "full economic, social and political equality for the Negro people and for all other minority groups. Solidarity with mass actions aimed at securing these rights as exemplified in the rent strikes, school boycotts, picketing of construction sites, public demonstrations and sit-ins. Uphold the right of self-defense against white supremacist violence."

The 1964 platform went on to demand "full use of the federal power to enforce all laws and court orders against discrimination and segregation. Enforce existing laws against lynch murder and police brutality and enact new ones. . . . Establish an FEPC with teeth and compensate minorities for the disadvantages they have suffered. Create a federal agency fully empowered and equipped to enforce minority rights in all spheres of national life. Federal action to guarantee and protect the right to vote in all national, state, county and city elections. Abolish all existing poll taxes." Finally, the platform urged, "Teach Negro and African history in the nation's schools. Combat all forms of anti-Semitism."²⁷

*The SWP, Malcolm X, and
Black Nationalism*

In 1964, 1965, and for some time thereafter the main concentration of the SWP insofar

as the black struggle was concerned centered on the figure of Malcolm X, and more broadly on the "black nationalist" current in black politics. George Breitman became the party's principal spokesman in these endeavors. Among other things, he edited a pamphlet on *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination* in 1967, edited a book of speeches, *Malcolm X Speaks*, wrote a book, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary*, and gave many speeches and wrote various articles about Malcolm.

Malcolm X had joined the Black Muslims (or Nation of Islam), led by Elijah Muhammad in 1952 and by the early 1960s was the group's principal figure in the New York area. However, early in 1964 he broke with Elijah Muhammad, at first organizing his own mosque in New York, and then establishing a more political group, the Organization of Afro-American Unity. He also made two trips abroad, one of them including a hajira to Mecca. At least in part due to these foreign travels he substantially altered his thinking, moving away from the extreme anti-white teachings of Elijah Muhammad and coming more to view the struggle of the blacks as part of a wider conflict involving all elements in U.S. and international society oppressed by existing social, economic, and political institutions. Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965, less than a year after his split with the Black Muslims.

The Socialist Workers Party leaders were attracted to and tried to influence the rapid evolution of Malcolm X's thinking after he broke with the Nation of Islam. George Breitman, in his book on Malcolm X's last year, argues that even while he was still a Black Muslim, "What he learned about such organizations as the Socialist Party and the Communist Party did not make him friendly. . . . One exception was Malcolm's attitude to *The Militant*, the weekly newspaper expressing the view of the Socialist Workers Party. While he was still a Black Muslim, Malcolm used to buy this paper when it was sold at meetings where he

spoke. Even at that time, he said after the split, he used to tell Negroes it was a good paper and they ought to read it."²⁸

Breitman also insisted that relations between Malcolm X and the swp "continued throughout Malcolm's last year, and were closer at the end than at the beginning."²⁹ There certainly was considerable contact between the swp and Malcolm X during this period. He spoke at two meetings of the swp's Militant Forum in New York City in April and May 1964.

Breitman also maintained that Malcolm X supported the swp's 1964 presidential election campaign, albeit very discreetly. He wrote, "Another speaker at this May 29 meeting was Clifton DeBerry, the Socialist Workers Party's presidential candidate in 1964. In the discussion period, Malcolm praised DeBerry's formulation of the need for a combination of firmness in principle with flexibility in tactics. A few weeks later, in a private discussion with DeBerry, Malcolm said that he sympathized with DeBerry's candidacy and that of course he was not going to support either the Democrats or the Republicans in the election. For various reasons, however, he felt that he could not openly endorse DeBerry. What he could do, he said was to 'open some doors' for DeBerry in Harlem, so that he would get a better hearing for his program and greater circulation for his literature. Malcolm did make such arrangements before his second trip to Africa in July, and before leaving he urged his closest co-workers to cooperate where possible with the Socialist Workers Party campaign."³⁰

Writing soon after Malcolm X's break with the Black Muslims, Breitman summed up the positive elements which the swp saw in the new positions he was adopting. These were: "[1] A positive, activist attitude toward the immediate, day-to-day struggles for better jobs, schools and housing. . . . [2] An advanced position on self-defense. . . . [3] A different approach to politics. . . . [4] Promotion of black unity." Breitman concluded that "revolutionary socialists, who under-

stand the progressive and revolutionary content of black nationalism, approve and support the course he is following and the contribution he is making to the mobilization of the Negro masses against an oppressive system. . . ."³¹

The swp's relations with Malcolm X reflected their general sympathy for "black nationalism." They did not interpret this as necessarily meaning the separation of American blacks into a nation of their own, such as had been advocated by the Communist Party in the early 1930s. In their pamphlet on Trotsky's attitude toward black nationalism they republished a resolution on the subject which had been passed by the party's convention of July 1939. It proclaimed that "the swp, while proclaiming its willingness to support the right of self-determination to the fullest degree, will not in itself, in the present stage, advocate the slogan of a Negro state in the manner of the Communist Party of the USA." The 1939 resolution added that "the advocacy of the right of self-determination does not mean advancing the slogan of self-determination. Self-determination for Negroes means that the Negroes themselves must determine their own future." The resolution warned that "Furthermore, a party predominantly white in membership which, in present-day America, vigorously advocates such a slogan, prejudices it in the minds of Negroes, who see it as a form of segregation." Finally, the 1939 resolution promised that "the swp will watch carefully the political development of the masses of the Negroes, will emphasize their right to make this important decision themselves, and the obligation of all revolutionaries to support whatever decision the Negroes may finally come to as to the necessity of a Negro state. The swp recognizes that the Negroes have not yet expressed themselves on this important question. . . ."³²

In its 1963 convention the swp again distinguished its conception of black nationalism from the call for a separate nation. A convention resolution stated that "Negro

nationalism, as it now exists, should not be equated with Negro separatism, the tendency that advocates creation of a separate Negro nation. . . . Nationalists want the right to decide their own destiny, and to create an independent movement and other conditions that will make it possible for them to decide their own destiny. But so far they have not made a choice in favor of a separate nation."³³

The swp did interpret "black nationalism" to mean independent black political action. In their 1964 platform they wrote that "the Socialist Workers Party supports independent Negro political action of the type manifested in the call for a Freedom Now Party." The platform added that "we urge the formation of an independent labor party based on the unions. We advocate an anti-capitalist political alliance of all who suffer discrimination and exploitation, black and white, in industry and on the land, in blue collars and white. . . ."³⁴

Four years later the swp was still maintaining its support of black nationalism. Paul Boutelle, the party's black vice presidential candidate, was reported to have been "chairman of a workshop discussion on 'The Black Nation' at the National Black Power Conference held in Philadelphia August 27-29. . . . The swp candidate was also the featured speaker at the Washington state nominating convention of the Black Panther party September 17."³⁵

An unsigned article in *International Socialist Review* early in 1968 explained the rationale of the support of the swp for an independent black party. It explained that "the Socialist Workers Party favors the formation of an independent party uniting Afro-Americans in political struggle for their just rights and freedom. It believes that black people have the democratic right to decide their own destiny and that, without such a political instrument, they cannot effectively advance their immediate well-being or attain their ultimate goals." The article then went on to maintain that "there is no contradiction between adhering to the

ideas of revolutionary socialism and championing an all-black party. To be sure, the one is consciously opposed to the capitalist order whereas the other may be only partially and potentially directed against its domination. But both will stand arrayed against a common enemy in the capitalist ruling class and should travel along the same road towards the same destination."

Finally, the article argued that "because black people are the most exploited, oppressed and aroused part of the population, it is reasonable to expect that they will become the first mass force to cut loose from the Democratic Party coalition and blaze a trail for others to follow. If they should establish an influential party of their own which carried through the fight against oppression and exploitation to the end, black Americans can be the vanguard of radical change in this country and play a decisive role in revolutionizing its political life."³⁶

As part of their support for Black nationalism the Socialist Workers Party strongly advocated "community control," particularly in predominantly black neighborhoods. The most notable example of this was at the time of the New York City teachers' strike in 1968 against a move to transfer nineteen teachers out of Public School 271 in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville area of Brooklyn during a struggle over community control of schools in that area. The swp was proud that it worked to break the 1968 New York City teachers' strike. *The Militant* reported that "swp campaigners have been active in supporting the struggle of black and Puerto Rican communities in New York to control their own schools and have helped open schools closed by the United Federation of Teachers' strike against community control of schools." The paper added that swp presidential candidate Fred Halstead "in fact, helped his community open the school that his daughter attends."³⁷

Women's Liberation

The Socialist Workers Party also aligned itself behind another of the movements

which arose and gained momentum in the 1960s, that of so-called women's liberation, although none of the major figures in that movement belonged to the party. The SWP's position on the issue was one of more or less orthodox Marxism and was presented in a pamphlet by George Novack entitled *Revolutionary Dynamics of Women's Liberation* issued in 1969.

Novack warned that "some participants in the women's liberation ranks approach the intolerable predicament of their sex in a highly personalized and unpolitical way. They seek relief and release through some sort of psychological readjustment, anti-male attitudes, or by gathering together in small utopian communities." However, he added, "Rational inquiry into the underlying causes of the age-long oppression of women is indispensable for working out the best ways and means of attacking and abolishing it."³⁸ Such rational inquiry is provided by Marxism, Novack insisted. He noted that "the Marxist explanation for the subjugation of women is based upon recognition of the fact that private ownership of the means of production, plus the right of property inheritance, was the prime condition for women's downfall. . . . It persists today in the most developed countries because property and power are monopolized by the capitalist class."³⁹ Hence, Novack insisted, there are severe limitations of the possibilities of the women's struggle under capitalism: "just as the bourgeois revolution transformed the Southern chattel slaves into impoverished landless freedmen and then returned them to new forms of bondage, so bourgeois reforms have allowed women to escape from being a complete chattel of the male master and become a 'free individual' in the bourgeois sense. What they have not done is to release women from the grip of the man and give them equality in the decisive spheres of social life."⁴⁰ Therefore, Novack explained, "It will take a thoroughgoing reorganization of the entire social setup from the economic foundations up to and including family rela-

tions before women can eradicate the causes of their inferior status and the evils flowing from it. In order to accomplish that, a socialist revolution, which will transfer state power and the means of production from the monopolists to the majority of the people must be carried through."⁴¹ He insisted that "a democratic workers' regime and the collective ownership of the means of production are required for any fundamental and beneficent transformation of the relations between men and women, husbands and wives, parents and children. . . . the exploited of both sexes must make common cause in getting rid of the capitalist class structure behind their deprivations."⁴²

SWP Electoral Activity

Throughout the 1960s the Socialist Workers Party continued to run candidates in presidential elections and in local and state contests where the opportunity presented itself. Undoubtedly a high point of electoral campaigning came during the 1968 contest.

The SWP candidates for president and vice president in 1968 were Fred Halstead and Paul Boutelle. In addition, the party ran forty-four candidates for lesser posts, including Peter Camejo for U.S. senator in California, Carl Finamore for governor of Illinois, and Bob Wilkinson, a Vietnam veteran, for governor of Wisconsin. All three had been active in the campus revolt in their respective states. Cliff Comer, who ran for U.S. senator from Georgia, was the first SWP candidate in the Deep South.

During this campaign the SWP nominees made the most of the free television and radio time which was available to them as candidates. As *The Militant* noted, "Both Halstead and Boutelle appeared on the popular Joey Bishop Show, which was carried by some 250 stations nationwide. Halstead appeared on a National Educational Television program carried by 140 stations, and Boutelle appeared for 15 minutes on the Dick Cavett show, a national ABC program broadcast by 250 stations. They appeared together

for an hour on William F. Buckley's 'Firing Line' show. This is only a fraction of the free radio-television time the SWP candidates were able to obtain."

In view of the heavy emphasis which the SWP was giving to antiwar work, particularly among students, much of the weight of the 1968 campaign was carried by the Young Socialist Alliance. It set up Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle and Afro-Americans for Halstead and Boutelle groups as campaign organizations. They sought endorsement from campus activists and claimed to have received them from people in all but four of the fifty states. They issued three numbers of a special periodical, *Afro Americans for Halstead and Boutelle Newsletter*, which was widely distributed on campuses throughout the country.

The two national nominees of the SWP campaigned for the better part of a year. They addressed numerous campus audiences, including 800 people who heard Boutelle at Arizona State University, 600 who listened to Halstead at the University of Wisconsin, and 350 each at Antioch College and the State University of New York at Albany. In addition, Boutelle spoke at a meeting organized by the Black Panther Party in Des Moines, and Halstead spoke before an antiwar demonstration of 30,000 people in San Francisco on April 27, 1968. The SWP candidates were apparently able to address few, if any, labor audiences.

The SWP estimated that it had distributed upward of 1,500,000 pieces of literature during the campaign, including 100,000 copies of the SWP platform. They posted some 309,600 campaign stickers. Special pamphlets were published including 9,000 on "Truth About the McCarthy Campaign," and one explaining "how the various Peace and Freedom Party formations are in actuality an obstacle to the development of independent black and labor parties."⁴³

The SWP succeeded in getting on the ballot in nineteen states, compared with only eight in 1964. *Intercontinental Press* reported

that "the SWP is on the ballot in Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. The party also filed in Tennessee and Connecticut but was arbitrarily ruled off. . . . During the campaign an estimated 117,000 signatures were collected on nominating petitions by SWP supporters."⁴⁴

The SWP summed up its electoral participation in 1968 by saying that "all of these accomplishments of the SWP campaign . . . demonstrated that revolutionary socialists can participate in the electoral process and register significant gains for the movement without in any way watering down or compromising their revolutionary principles."⁴⁵

Changing Class Composition of the SWP

With its attention and activity during the 1960s concentrated on antiwar activities, the black nationalist cause, electoral activities, and to a degree on the feminist movement, the Socialist Workers Party had little energy or personnel left to carry out work in the organized labor movement. In any case, the atmosphere in the trade unions was not a propitious one for would-be revolutionaries. There was a considerable economic prosperity during most of the decade, collective bargaining brought steady if unspectacular material gains for most union members, and the "bourgeoisification" of the manual labor force undoubtedly proceeded apace. Under these circumstances there were no significant movements of revolt against existing union leadership or large scale new organizational campaigns such as had given the Trotskyists their first—and so far only—opportunity to get a foothold in the organized labor movement. Although during the latter part of the 1960s there was substantial disagreement in the top echelons of the AFL-CIO over the Vietnam War, the SWP attitude

toward both contending groups in this dispute was one of almost equal hostility.

Hence, not only did the swp do little to try to develop influence in organized labor, but the conditions were not conducive to success even if such efforts had been made. As a consequence, the process of transformation of the social base of the principal Trotskyist party in the United States which had been under way for a long time was undoubtedly intensified during the 1960s.

The swp had lost some of its cadres in organized labor with the Shachtmanite split in 1940, but it more than recovered this lost ground right after World War II. However, by the late 1940s, as we have noted, many of its wartime recruits among the workers were falling away, and it had totally lost its first notable labor base, Minneapolis. Then, with the Cochranite split of 1953 the Socialist Workers Party lost the bulk of its activists in the organized labor movement. So as the party entered the 1960s it was already an overwhelmingly middle-class group.

We have no reliable figures concerning the class or social composition of the Socialist Workers Party at the end of the 1960s. But there is some evidence of the situation early in the decade. According to Laurence Ireland, one of the leaders of the minority opposition in the 1961-1963 period, "out of an swp population of around four to five hundred members, it is doubtful if even as many as ten percent can be said to be now employed in the concentrated industries." Ireland defines the "concentrated industries" as "mining, contract construction, manufacturing, transportation and public utilities." He went on to comment that "in any event, the comrades so employed fail to constitute any trade-union fractions, and for the most part, occupy the more comfortable jobs available in these industries." Finally, Ireland said that racial minorities "constitute only about 4 percent of the population of the swp."⁶

By the end of the 1960s the swp was probably two or three times the size it had been

a few years earlier, but only an infinitesimal number of its new recruits were members of the organized labor movement. The party was certainly much further away, after the New Left decade, from being what it had before aspired to be, the vanguard of the working class. It was, if anything, at best the vanguard for the working class.

swp Ideological Orientation in 1960s and Early 1970s

The kinds of activities in which the Socialist Workers Party and its youth affiliate centered their attention and recruiting efforts, and the change in class composition of the swp-YSA between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s resulted in a reformulation of the programmatic and ideological position of the major United States Trotskyist group. This alteration perhaps found its clearest expression in the "Program for Revolution," the collection of documents emerging from the Twenty-fourth National Convention of the swp in August 1971, and published in the *International Socialist Review* in November of that year.

These documents put primary emphasis on what the swp conceived of as a "radicalization" then in process in the United States. This perspective was perhaps most clearly stated in a resolution entitled "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization," adopted by the convention by a vote of 106 to 7. It stated:

Since the 1969 convention of the Socialist Workers Party, the process of radicalization has continued to deepen. Following the Moratorium and March on Washington in October and November 1969, the antiwar movement achieved its broadest mobilization to date and most clearly demonstrated its potential in the May 1970 antiwar upsurge. During the same year two powerful new contingents entered the radicalization in a massive way, the movement for chicano self-determi-

nation and the women's liberation movement.

This period also saw the emergence of the gay liberation movement; organized revolts in the prisons from New York to California demanding prison and judicial reform, inspired by the nationalist radicalization; increased radicalization inside the Catholic Church led by a militant layer of nuns and priests; deepening revulsion against capitalism's destruction of our environment and the ecological system on which humanity depends; the continued formation of radical caucuses in all types of professional organizations; and intensified Black nationalist sentiment and organization and further antiwar radicalization within the army. Neither in the Debsian radicalization nor in the thirties were there comparable upheavals in these sectors of American life.⁴⁷

The SWP stopped short of claiming that all of this added up to a revolutionary situation. Jack Barnes, then Organization Secretary of the SWP, in introducing the resolution on "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization" to the plenum of the National Committee of the party in March 1971 (which sent it for discussion to the party membership and ultimate adoption by the August convention) made that point. He posed the question, "how do we fit these seemingly contradictory observations together: the idea that this is the deepest, broadest, and most promising radicalization in American history, with the fact that the forces that can pose the question of power and reorganize society on a new basis, that were politically involved in the thirties in large numbers, are not now on the march to the same degree?"

He answered his own question by saying that "the decisive questions for us in analyzing the depth and promise of the radicalization is not whether the working class self-consciously and in very large numbers is at

this point involved. That does not settle this question. It does not belittle the radicalization to point out that the working class has not yet intervened in this manner. In fact, it indicates to us how powerful the radicalization will become with the large-scale involvement of the working class and the potential speed with which a prerevolutionary situation could arise when that happens."⁴⁸

Barnes argued that the transformation of the "radicalization" into a prerevolutionary situation was virtually inevitable. He said that "in this radicalization we are seeing the rise of the self-conscious struggle and organization of America's oppressed nationalities and the beginnings of movement whose demands are so deep that they can only be begun to be met by a workers state—and we are seeing this *prior* to the large-scale participation by the working class in the radicalization, let alone a revolutionary upsurge." Barnes claimed that "the questions of alienation of the hierarchical relationships necessary to capitalist society which foster and rationalize oppression based on class, race, sex, age, etc.; of who controls one's life and work—all being raised by one or another different movement—become generalized and begin affecting the consciousness of the entire population—including the working class—that directly faces all these problems. We also see a process occurring which is important in any radicalization and can eventually be a key factor leading to a revolutionary situation. That is the gradual decay of the moral authority of the rulers, their representatives and their institutions. . . ."⁴⁹

The SWP leadership's view was that the party's role in the "radicalization" then under way was to acquire as much of a leadership position as possible and try to "revolutionize" the radicalization. Barnes wrote that "the key thing is that as the radicalization deepens, as new movements arise, as new sectors come into struggle . . . that we champion the progressive demands of these movements, and we act as revolutionists

toward them and in them. Then as long as we're clear about our political principles we should find no insurmountable obstacles to coming to grips with these movements, analyzing them and incorporating generalizations and demands flowing from them into our program."⁵⁰

The SWP leadership paid due homage to the traditional Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist position that revolutionary process required the leadership of a revolutionary party, and that the party's principal task in the process of "radicalization" was to form the cadres for such a party. Jack Barnes observed that "in the final analysis, the decisive question is the construction of a mass Trotskyist party. We proceed from the recognition that the SWP is not yet that mass party. We are a small but growing nucleus of cadres formed around the revolutionary-socialist program necessary to build such a party. Thus recruiting, training, and assimilating such cadres are the indispensable preconditions for building a mass workers' party. . . . Today our immediate goal is the recruitment of more and more of the young militants radicalized in the current political struggles, and the transformation of these recruits through education and experience into Trotskyist cadres. . . ."⁵¹

It is clear from the 1971 documents that the SWP leadership felt the party's focus at that time had to be almost exclusively on the various elements then participating in the process of "radicalization." They specifically rejected a direct attempt to influence the organized workers by getting party members into workplaces and union organizations.

Barnes, in his report, noted that "our opponents . . . all counter-posed to our perspective what they must think is a new discovery. Their strategy for party building is what the CP calls an 'industrial concentration,' what the IS calls 'workers work,' what Wohlforth modestly calls his 'proletarian orientation,' what Progressive Labor calls the colonization of selected key plants,' etc. . . .

what they all come down to are subjective and arbitrary shortcuts by a handful aimed at bridging the objective gap between the pace and characteristics of the radicalization of the decisive sections of the working class and the growing radicalization of other oppressed sectors of the population. They ultimately come down to a gimmick substituting for a Leninist strategy of party building."

Barnes specifically rejected the idea that any attempt should be made to have the overwhelmingly middle and upper class youths then being recruited to the SWP-YSA become "proletarianized." He said in further discussion of the "gimmick" he had already denounced that "the second justification is what we call the 'class composition' justification. That is, the idea that the central problem of a small group of cadres trying to increase their size and build the nucleus of a mass party is its class composition. This problem is 'solved' by telling everyone to get a job in industry. In other words, this is an attempt to solve the problem of building a proletarian party through taking a small group of cadres and substituting a transformation of the social composition of these cadres through colonization in industry, for the construction of a cadre that will be the necessary nucleus of a fighting mass proletarian party."⁵²

International Activities of the swp

The Socialist Workers Party played an active role in the international Trotskyist movement during the 1960s. Indeed, the nature of that role was the principal cause of internal dissension within the party during that period. In the early 1960s there was a realignment within International Trotskyism. The nature of this is discussed at some length elsewhere in this volume. Here it is sufficient to note that because, on the one hand, of coincidence in outlook on the Cuban Revolution between the SWP leaders and those of the "Pabloite" International Secretariat (IS), and because of a drastic modification of

the "deep entrisim" into Communist and Socialist parties supported by the IS at the time of the split in the International in 1953-54 a rapprochement developed between the SWP and the International Secretariat. At the same time there was strong disagreement, particularly on the Cuban issue, between the SWP leaders and their most important European associate, Gerry Healy of the Socialist Labour League of Great Britain.

As a consequence of these developments, the Socialist Workers Party and a few other groups which had been associated with the International Committee since 1953-54, withdrew from the International Committee and joined forces with the bulk of the adherents of the International Secretariat to establish in 1963 the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. By the end of the decade a new struggle pitting the SWP and some of its allies, particularly in Latin America, against the principal figures in the ex-International Secretariat had already begun.

The Factional Struggle of the Early 1960s

Still another factional struggle culminating in two separate splits in the Socialist Workers Party took place between mid-1961 and early 1964. Although these new divisions did not result in a numerically large defection from the party they were of some consequence to the SWP. In the first place the issues in controversy centered on key elements of the party's international policy—particularly its attitude toward the Cuban Revolution and its participation in the "reunification" of the Fourth International in 1963. Second, it resulted in the defections of most of the young ex-Shachtmanite leaders who had been its most important recruits during the 1950s, as well as provoking the loss of a number of older individual figures. Finally, it resulted in establishment of two

small but persistent rivals to the SWP for the mantle of Trotskyism in the United States, the Spartacist League and the Workers League.

Subsequently an official publication of the Spartacists noted that concerning the origins of the new opposition group—the Revolutionary Tendency (RT)—which appeared in the SWP in 1961, "The nucleus of the RT originated in the central leadership of the Young Socialist Alliance, and first came together as a left opposition to the SWP Majority's uncritical line toward the course of the Cuban Revolution." The Spartacists added that "this preliminary dispute culminated in the adoption of a thoroughly revisionist position by the SWP Majority at the June 1961 party convention."⁵³

Tim Wohlforth, one of the principal leaders of the original Revolutionary Tendency, described further the nature of the new opposition. He wrote that "we began essentially as a section of the leadership of the youth organization, the YSA. Our strength then flowed from the fact that we represented the first new wave of revolutionary forces which has come to the party in the recent period. . . . Essentially the original core of our minority had little or no roots in the party and little experience at anything other than student work. . . . When we began our oppositional struggle in the party, in many ways we were not really a part of the party—we were almost functioning as if we were an outside force."⁵⁴

The new Revolutionary Tendency was not totally without influence. For one thing, Wohlforth was a member of the Political Bureau of the SWP. For another, it had the support of a few older leaders, some of whom shared its point of view, others of whom at least opposed the ultimate move of the majority to expel the dissidents.

The most significant document generated by the Revolutionary Tendency was "In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective—A Statement of Basic Position," (INDORP), drawn up by Tim Wohlforth with the coop-

eration of several other people, and presented to the National Committee of the SWP in March 1962. It was debated at the plenum of the National Committee in June 1962, where it was turned down 43-4.⁵⁵ This document discussed at considerable length the origins of "Pabloism" in the Fourth International, accused the majority of the SWP of veering towards Pabloism in its willingness to accept in the Cuban case and elsewhere the possibility of the establishment of a workers state under "petty bourgeois" leadership and without the previous existence of a revolutionary vanguard party. It also strongly criticized the SWP leadership for seeking reunification with the International Secretariat of the Fourth International (headed by Pablo), and distancing itself from the International Committee of the Fourth International, which the SWP had taken the lead in forming at the time of the split in the International in 1953-54.

The INDORP document summarized its criticisms of the SWP majority thus: we believe that the failure of the SWP leadership to apply and develop the theory and method of Marxism has resulted in a dangerous drift from a revolutionary world perspective. The adoption in practice of the empiricist and objectivist approach of the Pabloites, the minimization of the critical importance of the creation of a new Marxist proletarian leadership in all countries, the consistent underplaying of the counter-revolutionary role and potential of Stalinism, the powerful tendencies toward accommodation to non-proletarian leaderships particularly in the colonial revolution—these pose, if not countered, a serious threat to the future development of the SWP itself.⁵⁶

The Revolutionary Tendency document then presented a ten-point summary of its own position. The key elements were "(1) We look to the working class and *only* the working class as the revolutionary force in modern society. (2) We consider the creation

of the revolutionary Marxist parties, that is, Trotskyist parties, as *essential* to the victory of socialism in every country in the world. (3) We call for the reviving of the traditional Trotskyist emphasis on workers democracy as an essential part of our program and propaganda. (4) We hold that Stalinism is counter-revolutionary in essence. . . . (6) We call for a political struggle against Pabloism internationally and Pabloite ideas and methodology within our own ranks. . . ." The INDORP also expressed support for reunification of the Fourth International only "on the political basis of a reaffirmation of the fundamentals of Trotskyism. . . ." Finally, it called for a return to the SWP's "Theses on the American Revolution" of 1946, and its emphasis on the SWP "as the American section of our world party. . . ."⁵⁷

At its inception the Revolutionary Tendency controlled a majority of the National Committee of the Young Socialist Alliance, although the SWP majority soon succeeded in ousting them. The Revolutionary Tendency continued to consist of relatively young people. Some of its documents commented with acerbity on the superannuated nature of the majority leadership. Thus, a document on "the Centrism of the SWP and the Tasks of the Minority" by James Robertson and Larry Ireland noted that "the SWP in its leadership has become a very old party. From 1928 to the present—34 years—it has been led by the same continuous and little changing body of personnel. Thus it is the most long-lived, ostensibly revolutionary, organization in history. Its current National Committee must have one of the highest average ages of any communist movement ever."⁵⁸

At the beginning the Revolutionary Tendency was very small. Robertson wrote in October 1961 that "we are a nominal 35 or so comrades. About fifteen in NYC . . . in addition, a similar number in the Bay Area. . . . Then there are a couple of valuable but isolated comrades . . . elsewhere."⁵⁹ Subsequently, Wohlforth claimed that it had been

"possible for us to consolidate our forces in the East Bay, to fuse with working class cadres in San Francisco, Detroit and Philadelphia, and to make a serious impact on the New Haven group."⁶⁰

During the latter part of 1962 the already small Revolutionary Tendency broke into two separate groups. One was headed by Robertson, the other by Wohlforth. The former tended to put much greater emphasis on factional work than upon work for the SWP itself, and to be rather contemptuous toward party discipline. Wohlforth, on the other hand, emphasized the need for the opposition, through being very active in the party's "external" work and very careful about not violating SWP discipline, to avoid giving the majority any excuse for expelling the dissidents.⁶¹

The only effect of the more cautious attitude of Wohlforth and his associates was to bring about their expulsion from the Socialist Workers Party a little later than that of the Robertson group. In December 1963, Robertson, Larry Ireland, Lynne Harper, Shane Mage, and Geoff White were expelled. Subsequently, others of their group were thrown out,⁶² and soon afterward this group organized the Spartacist League.

Wohlforth and his supporters were expelled from the Socialist Workers Party in 1964. They immediately formed the American Committee for the Fourth International, which in 1966 became the Workers League.⁶³

The Spartacists later summed up the schisms in the SWP which occurred in the period following their own expulsion. They wrote that "more RI supporters were expelled; then supporters of other tendencies, both left and right (Wohlforth, Philips and Swabek) were pushed until they broke discipline, then were formally expelled, while whole local branches (New Haven, Seattle and Milwaukee) left."⁶⁴

Although most of those expelled were among the recruits of the late 1950s, a few older figures also left. Joyce Cowley, one of

the signers of the INDRP document, was one of these. Another was Myra Tanner Weiss, three-time SWP candidate for vice president. As a member of the Political Committee, she had presented a resolution to its November 1, 1963, meeting opposing expulsion of Robertson and the others, which concluded, "I propose that we apologize to the minority for the unwarranted investigation and express our desire to collaborate in comradely fashion in the future for the building of the Socialist Workers Party."⁶⁵ Soon afterward, she resigned from the party.⁶⁶

A few other older party leaders left soon after this, for other reasons. The most important of these was Arne Swabek, a founder of both the Communist Party and the Trotskyist movement, who became an avowed Maoist. He was expelled in 1967 "for violations of discipline."⁶⁷

Conclusions

In spite of the defections from the Socialist Workers Party of many of those young people who had been recruited during the late 1950s, the SWP grew substantially during the 1960s. It was able to benefit modestly from the mass movements against the Vietnam War, and for black and women's rights. However, as a consequence the social composition of the country's major Trotskyist group was greatly altered. Whatever remnants of a working-class membership the SWP still had at the beginning of the 1960s was overwhelmed by the middle-, lower-middle-, and upper-class recruits who were brought in during the decade. Few workers were recruited. This change in the nature of the SWP membership was to have important consequences in the following decade and a half.

U.S. Trotskyism: The Socialist Workers Party in the 1970s and Early 1980s

After the heyday of its activity and influence in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Socialist Workers Party reoriented itself in several ways. In the late 1970s it adopted the strategy of "colonizing" the organized labor movement which it had earlier rejected. By the early 1980s the party was going through an internal discussion and struggle in which the majority of the leadership seemed to be moving toward a complete ideological reorientation which, if it continued, seemed likely to take the swp entirely out of the world Trotskyist movement.

"Objective"

Causes of swp Reorientation

The changes in swp strategy and the growing trend toward a complete ideological realignment are certainly in part a reflection of the changing milieu in which the party had to work. The constituencies in which it built up its strength in the 1960s and very early 1970s either largely disappeared or took directions which were not hospitable to the party's further growth.

The anti-Vietnam War movement died a natural death. It was seriously undermined when President Nixon introduced the "lottery" system of conscription, with the result that college students were no longer under the constant menace of being drafted—but instead, knew for sure that they either were going to go, or (in the great majority of cases) that they were not going to be called. The movement completely collapsed with the U.S. defeat in Vietnam.

Black nationalism suffered a somewhat different kind of retrogression. With the

broadening of the possibilities for political action and influence within the established major parties, most politically active blacks became oriented toward the more mundane if less exciting work of gaining influence and elective positions through these parties, particularly the Democratic Party. The "nationalist" appeal among blacks therefore became less attractive. Furthermore, the black nationalist leader with whom the swers had established contact, Malcolm X, had been killed even before the end of the 1960s and the Socialist Workers Party people were not successful in winning over any of his close associates or followers. The fate of black nationalism is perhaps best symbolized by the transformation of the Black Muslim movement; and the rejection by its majority of its former general antipathy toward all whites.

The feminist movement underwent somewhat the same experience. With the extension of more opportunities for leadership within the established political structure, increasingly large numbers of politically oriented women sought to take advantage of these opportunities.

Other movements in which the swp had taken an interest and sought to become active, such as those of chicanos and homosexuals, experienced somewhat the same development. Becoming increasingly interested in making immediate gains, they also tended increasingly to work within the established order rather than openly revolt against it.

The dozen or so years after 1972 were, on balance, a conservative period. University students, among whom the swp had recruited with particular success in the preceding period, generally became concerned with mundane questions of grades and career opportunities, and their proclivity for political activity of all kinds—particularly radical political activity—drastically declined. Among the general population there tended to be a reaction against what the swp had called the "radicalization" of the 1960s

and very early 1970s. This trend culminated in the election in 1980 of Ronald Reagan, the principal figure in the right wing of the Republican Party and certainly the most conservative president since Calvin Coolidge.

Decline of SWP-YSA

The consequence of changed "objective" circumstances was a decline in the membership and influence of the main U.S. Trotskyist grouping. Although the Socialist Workers Party did not make public information on its membership, the Young Socialist Alliance did, and their figures indicated a drastic decline in the latter part of the 1970s. One can only surmise that, although it may not have been as marked in the adult organization as in the YSA, the Socialist Workers Party also suffered at least to some degree from a similar fall in membership.

At the time of the 1972 convention of the Young Socialist Alliance it was reported that the 200 delegates were "representing sixty YSA locals in thirty states. . . ."¹ The YSA probably reached its high point in 1975-76. At the 1976 convention it was reported that there were 1,400 members in sixty-five chapters.² A year later a sharp drop in membership was reported by Chuck Petrin, the national organizational secretary—it was down to 800. In part, this drop was attributed to the fact that "many YSA members who were also in the Socialist Workers party left the YSA to devote their energies to building the SWP."³

At the January 1978 YSA convention, National Organizational Secretary Betsy Farley reported on experiments "with new organizational forms." She described the impact of these changes on the YSA: "While on the one hand they had helped the YSA to achieve its goal of becoming firmly rooted on the college campuses . . . they also had some negative effects, leading to a breakdown in collaboration between the YSA and the SWP."⁴

By late 1979 Roger Horowitz of the National Committee of the YSA was writing in the organization's internal bulletin that "to be blunt, the YSA is in trouble right now. Our membership has fallen to less than 400, our average age is over twenty-three, sales of our press have gone from 4000 last spring to 3000 this fall, and most significantly, recruitment of new members is way down."⁵ Clearly, the impetus which had made the Young Socialist Alliance the largest radical youth group in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and had substantially bolstered the SWP as well, had run out of steam by the second half of the 1970s. There were also indications that the Socialist Workers Party itself was undergoing some difficulties. The size of its newspaper, *The Militant*, was reduced, and their international news organ, *Intercontinental Press*, was cut back from a weekly to a biweekly.⁶ These trends sufficiently justified the SWP in reorienting itself in the more traditional Trotskyist direction of trying to become a predominantly working-class party composed largely of trade unionists.

The Turn to Industry

SWP Explanation of the Turn to Industry

By the mid-1970s the Socialist Workers Party had shown some signs of a renewed interest in trying to work within the trade union movement. It was reported that in his political report to the 1976 convention of the party National Secretary Jack Barnes "pointed to the profound interrelation between the political struggles of the oppressed in American society as a whole and the fight for a class-struggle left wing in the American labor movement." He cited the example of "the fight for democracy going on inside the steel workers union today. This struggle is already attracting activists among the oppressed nationalities and fighters for women's rights."

It is clear that in the 1976 convention the SWP was still principally oriented toward ethnic and similar interest groups. For instance, the article on the convention which appeared in *Intercontinental Press* noted that "forty-four percent of the delegates were women, up from 36 percent in 1975," and that "the National Committee elected at the convention includes twenty members of oppressed nationalities, as compared with fifteen on the outgoing committee," but makes no reference to the number of delegates or committee members who belonged to unions.⁷

It was not until early 1978 that the SWP decided generally to reorient the party's activities toward the labor movement. Will Reissner, reporting on the 1979 party convention, noted that

the decision to do this was made at a February 1978 meeting of the SWP National Committee. It flowed from the SWP's evaluation of the worldwide capitalist austerity drive and the growing alienation of American workers from the institutions of capitalist rule had created new opportunities for the party to do fruitful political work in the major work-places and unions of industrial workers. These openings, the National Committee decided, made it imperative that the SWP concentrate its efforts on becoming a party of socialist industrial workers through colonization of cadres who had been recruited in the movements for social change over the past two decades.

He also noted that the decision was in conformity with the policy of the United Secretariat "to make such a turn toward the industrial working class throughout the world."⁸

In arguing in favor of the new "turn to industry" for the SWP, the leaders of the party stressed several reasons for it. The first was that American capitalism was allegedly entering a profound new crisis. Early in 1978 Jack Barnes claimed that "we have no Arma-

geddon point of view based on conjunctural economic estimates. But we know that by 1974-75 we had entered a period of crises for capitalism—one we will not come out of without gigantic battles for power. That's what we are convinced of."⁹

The SWP leaders also argued that the middle-class radicals with whom they had worked so closely in the 1960s and early 1970s had by the late 1970s turned conservative. After 1980 they accused those people of being "Marielitos," that is, people fleeing from the revolution, as 130,000 Cubans had done when they left Cuba from the small port of Mariel. In March 1982 Barnes argued that "there is no question whatsoever that we face a Mariel in American radical movement. That is without doubt what is happening on the U.S. left as the blows against the working class come down, as the polarization deepens, and as the imperialist war pressure mounts. The difference between conditions and consciousness born of being a worker and that produced by being immersed in a petty-bourgeois milieu is widening. And the ranks of the North American *marielitos* are growing."¹⁰

The SWP leaders claimed that, as middle-class radicals were turning conservative, the workers, particularly the workers in heavy industry, had moved to "center stage" of U.S. politics. Thus, in presenting the motion to the February 1978 Plenum where the "turn to industry" was decided upon, Jack Barnes argued that "prior to 1974 much of the political activity took the course around, and not through, either the industrial unions or the workers in industry. But following Nixon's 1971 wage freeze that changed. As we got closer to the 1974-75 depression, it changed more and more. Prior to this, though, the best arena for recruitment to our working class programs was not in these unions."¹¹ Barnes went on to say that "we are still in a preparatory period—not a period when we are leading mass class struggle actions. We must make no mistake about that. . . . But it is a preparatory period

in which the *center of American politics has shifted to the industrial working class*. That's the central political judgment we put before the plenum. By not making this move now, we would unnecessarily cut ourselves off from the center of American politics."¹²

Furthermore, the industrial workers were, according to the SWP leadership, becoming more radical. In his February 1978 speech Barnes argued that "the Political Committee became convinced that there are more workers developing anticapitalist sentiment or greater openness to anticapitalist conclusions and solutions today than at any other time in American history."¹³

The Turn to Industry in Practice

During the first half of 1979 the SWP held national conferences of its members in the United Steelworkers, United Auto Workers, International Association of Machinists, and the railroad unions. Malik Miah reported that "the purpose of the four industrial conferences was to bring together socialist activists in these unions to discuss the impact of the capitalist offensive in each particular industry and its work force and to exchange experiences about how workers are resisting the antilabor assaults. Most important, the meetings were held to discuss and decide what socialist workers, acting together as a national team, can do to move these struggles forward and win new supporters and members to the socialist movement."¹⁴

The "colonization" strategy was endorsed by the Thirtieth National Convention of the SWP in August 1979. The policy was overwhelmingly endorsed, only one vote being cast for a "counterresolution" entitled "Against the Workerist Turn: A Critique and Some Proposals."¹⁵

By late 1982 it was reported that "today, about half of the party members hold industrial jobs and some seventy-six percent are either in industry, temporarily laid off from industrial jobs, or have left such jobs for a

brief period to work full-time for the party." At the same time it was noted that although a number of party members employed in the basic industries had been laid off, "the number hired in other sectors of the economy, such as petrochemical, garment, and electric, has compensated for these layoffs."

Barnes summed up the SWP's alleged position in the industrial field in 1982 by saying that

the most important test for us was a very simple one. We went through a bad year of depression, with massive layoffs and massive pressures, yet there's no fundamental change in the party. Some fractions have been weakened, some people have changed jobs, but the party as a whole hasn't been changed. We haven't fled from the industrial working class as a result of these pressures. We're in. We're in to stay. We're part of what's going on. We're more and more not going through an experiment, but going through these experiences as *part* of the working class.¹⁶

In July-August 1982 the SWP held one of its more or less regular educational conferences, at which particular attention was given to the role of party members in the labor movement. Some 1,200 people reportedly attended, and "about half of those attending were workers from major industries and unions where the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance . . . have many members: coal mining, steel, auto, rail, garment and textile, petrochemical, electrical, aerospace and machinists, transit and teamsters." About half of those participating were under thirty-eight, and "some 73 participants were Afro-Americans, and 66 were Latinos."

This conference was the occasion for fraction meetings of SWP workers in various fields. There were a hundred classes held during the six days of the session, dealing with "three broad areas: Marx, Engels and revolutionary politics; the class struggle in

the United States, and international revolutionary developments." Particular attention was given to "a five part series on the workers and farmers government presented by Steve Clark, a member of the swp Political Bureau."¹⁷

The swp renewed its old interest in the question of establishing a Labor Party in the United States. Thus, in an article commenting on the doubts about whether such a party is likely to appear expressed by British Labor Party left-wing leader Anthony Wedgewood Benn, Frank Lovell wrote in *The Militant* on November 7, 1980, that "the working class, and only the working class is capable of reorganizing society and eliminating the evils of capitalism. And to accomplish this historic mission, the working class must organize its own political party in all countries of the world, the purpose being to establish the world socialist order for the liberation of all humankind. This is what socialists learned from Marx and Engels. And they understood that anyone who claimed to be a socialist and joined one of the master class political parties, which exist for the sole purpose of deceiving the voters, was a renegade."¹⁸ Lovell added that "in this country today the union movement can become a greater power in government in a shorter time, once the break with capitalist politics is made and the movement for a labor party begins to roll."¹⁹

Peculiarities of the Turn to Industry

There were certain aspects of this new attempt of the Socialist Workers Party to gain a base in the organized labor movement which deserve special note. They were strongly criticized by elements in the leadership of the party who were opposed to the faction headed by National Secretary Jack Barnes, which was principally responsible for proposing and carrying out the "turn to industry."

In the first place, the effort to reestablish a footing in the labor movement was confined

almost exclusively to the unions of workers in heavy industry. While the "turn" was under way, in fact, the small base which the swp did have in the white collar-professional union field was apparently liquidated.

This appears not to have been the original intention of the Barnes leadership. In his speech to the February 1979 plenum which launched the "Turn to Industry," Barnes said, "This doesn't mean we won't do work in, or pay careful attention to, AFSCME, or the teachers' union. In fact we will grow, we will recruit bigger fractions in the AFT, NEA, AFSCME, and so on. This does not distract from the importance of the work of our comrades there either. . . . We are making a concrete explicit decision that we are not putting people in the AFSCME, the OPEIU, or the teachers' unions as a normal policy. But we are going to recruit teachers and other public and clerical workers. We will have fractions in these unions."²⁰ But a plenum of the swp National Committee in April 1981 decided to send virtually everyone except the party's own employees, and members who were retired, into the industrial unions. Malik Miah reported on this at the plenum in the name of the majority party leadership: "First is the need to deepen the turn itself. Currently fifty percent of the party is in industry. About ten percent of comrades are on layoff or looking for work. Then there is another seventeen percent of the party on full-time staff or retired. This leaves approximately twenty-twenty-five percent of the party as potential candidates to get jobs in industry—in their current cities or in new parts of the country."

The result of this new interpretation of the "turn to industry" was the liquidation of all swp party fractions in the white-collar and professional unions. Two members who had been particularly active in (AFSCME) the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the American Federation of Teachers, Ray Markey and Jeff Mackler respectively, were told to cease their efforts in those organizations and were

removed from the SWP's National Committee.²¹

Another peculiarity of the SWP's attempt to penetrate the labor movement was the party leadership's apparent prohibition of SWP members' seeking or accepting any responsible union posts.²² This sharply contrasted with traditional party policy, in the 1930s through 1950s, when the Trotskyists held significant offices in a variety of unions.

Finally, the SWP, having "assigned" members to a particular industry in a particular place, frequently "reassigned" them elsewhere. As the "Platform" adopted by the opposition groups in the SWP National Committee in 1983 stated the situation: "Our real isolation from the workers is further compounded by job-hopping. A cavalier attitude toward holding a job is deliberately promoted, making it difficult or impossible for comrades to acquire the necessary experience in, or knowledge about, the struggles in their industry, making them perennial newcomers who cannot speak with authority, and alienating us from workers who cannot afford this luxury. The policy of reassigning comrades from industry to industry has also left them with lowered seniority and thus more vulnerable to lay-offs. All of this undermines our ability to build ongoing, functioning fractions."²³

After the first half-decade of this SWP "colonizing" strategy in the labor movement there was no indication that the party had gained any substantial influence in organized labor comparable to that which it had enjoyed during the late 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s. However, the renewed party emphasis on trying to acquire such influence so that it could become at least to some degree the "vanguard" of the working class in fact, rather than just in abstract theory, constituted a major reversal of SWP strategy. It was a sharp break with policies of almost a quarter of a century during which the party had centered its attention and recruiting efforts principally on middle and upper class

youth and on ethnic groups and special interest constituencies with no integral connection with the organized working class.

SWP Electoral Activities

The Socialist Workers Party put its resources to a growing degree into party electoral activity. Not only did it run candidates in the 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1984 presidential elections (as had become its custom), but it put up nominees in increasingly large numbers of congressional contests as well as in state and local elections.

In 1972 the SWP named thirty-one-year-old Linda Jenness and twenty-one-year-old Andrew Pulley, a black, as their presidential and vice presidential candidates. The party's platform, "What Socialists Want," indicated the range of issues the SWP stressed during the campaign. The thirteen points were "Bring all the troops home now! Stop the bombing of Indochina!," "For a program to meet the needs of the working people," "End the burden on low-income families," "For the democratic right of Black people to control their own communities," "Chicano Liberation," "End the oppression of women," "Halt the destruction of the environment," "Support the demands of America's youth," "End inhuman treatment of prisoners," "For democratic election laws," "Full civil and human rights for gay people," "Protect and extend civil liberties," "For government ownership of industry," and "For a Socialist America."²⁴

The SWP national candidates in 1972 received 68,266 votes, compared with 25,295 for the Communist Party ticket, 53,811 for the Socialist Labor Party, and 78,801 for Benjamin Spock, running as an independent leftist.²⁵ In addition, the SWP ran ninety-five candidates for other offices, in sixteen states, including nominees for governor of Texas, senator from Massachusetts, and candidates against black congressmen Charles Rangel in New York and Ron Delums in California.²⁶

Four years later, in 1976, the SWP named Pedro Camejo and Willie Mae Reid, a black, as their national nominees. Their candidacy was announced by the National Committee of the party on December 27, 1975.²⁷ During the campaign the party distributed over a million pieces of literature and the candidates were "interviewed by major daily newspapers and television stations throughout the country." They were on the ballot in twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia.²⁸ They made a particular point during the campaign of the law suit which the Socialist Workers Party had begun against U.S. government espionage in the SWP; *Intercontinental Press* noted that "the combined approach of suing the government while running in the elections has been particularly effective."²⁹ The SWP candidates were endorsed by two dissident Trotskyist groups, the Workers League and the Spark group.³⁰

In 1980 the Socialist Workers Party named Andrew Pulley (still only twenty-eight years old) for president and Matilde Zimmermann for vice president. One piece of campaign literature noted that Pulley was a member of United Steelworkers Local 1066 in Gary and had run for mayor of Chicago in 1979, when he "reached thousands of working people through televised debates with his opponents and extensive radio and newspaper coverage. He called on the labor movement to form its own party in opposition to the Democrats and Republicans, to fight back against the capitalists' offensive against working people's rights and living standards." The same document noted that Zimmermann was on the staff of *The Militant*, had "helped organize many antiwar demonstrations," belonged to the National Organization of Women, and "has campaigned in defense of abortion rights, for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, and in support of affirmative action."³¹ The SWP vote in 1980 was half of four years earlier.³²

In the 1984 election the SWP named Mel

Mason for vice president. Mel Mason, a one-time Black Panther, was forty-one years old and had been a member of the City Council of Seaside, California, as well as student activities coordinator of Monterey Peninsula College before resigning those posts to run for president. Andrea González was national secretary of the Young Socialist Alliance. She was only thirty-two.³³ Throughout the country the party fielded fifty-eight candidates in 1984, including nominees for the U.S. Senate and House, governorships, and a few local positions.³⁴ Mason and González officially received 24,687 votes.³⁵

The SWP also ran candidates extensively in nonpresidential years. In 1982 it put up nominees in twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia, including Mel Mason, then a member of the Seaside City Council and of the SWP National Committee, as nominee for governor of California. Mac Warren of the SWP Political Bureau, after explaining to the July–August 1982 SWP educational conference that "the number one antiwar, antiracist, antisexist, anticapitalist activity we will be carrying out will be the socialist election campaigns," expounded on the party's reasons for expanding so much energy on electoral activity. "Just think about what we are able to do over the course of the petitioning campaigns. We talked to hundreds of thousands of people all over the country. Hundreds of people signed cards asking for more information and got subscriptions to *The Militant*. Many thousands of people signed our petitions not just because they support our democratic right to be on the ballot, but also because of what we have to say on fighting war, racism and on the big issues of the day."³⁶

The SWP Suit Against the Government

A good deal of time and energy of leaders of the Socialist Workers Party between 1973 and 1981 was taken up with the party's suit against the U.S. government. The suit got a

great deal of attention in the *SWP* press and some notice in the periodicals of other radical groups, with even occasional notice in the "capitalist" press.

The beginning of the court action was announced in the July 27, 1973, issue of *The Militant*. The periodical wrote that "the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance filed suit here today in federal district court against Richard Nixon, John Mitchell, H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman, and fifteen other officials and former officials of the U.S. government."

The objectives of the suit were "for a court injunction to halt all government harassment, intimidation, and illegal spying on the *SWP* and *YSA*. It also seeks to have the attorney general's list of 'subversive' organizations ruled unconstitutional. . . ." In addition, the plaintiffs are asking for damages totalling more than \$27 million for the numerous violations of rights suffered by the *SWP* and *YSA* and by individual members of the two groups.³⁷

The case did not actually come to trial for almost eight years. Most of the intervening time was taken up with pretrial hearings and, in particular, attempts by the *SWP* and *YSA* attorneys to get the *FBI* and other government organizations to disclose the details of the spying and other activities conducted against the *SWP*.

Government lawyers fought tenaciously to prevent the details of *FBI* operations against the Trotskyists from being disclosed in court. At one point the presiding judge, Thomas Griesa, went so far as to hold Attorney General Griffin Bell in contempt of court for failure to produce in court subpoenaed material, a move which was ultimately quashed by the Supreme Court.³⁸

Early in the hearings, in March 1975, the *SWP* did obtain 3,138 pages of *FBI* memos which disclosed "forty-one separate 'disruption' programs against the *SWP* and *YSA* as part of the *FBI*'s 'Cointelpro' (Counterintelligence Program). . . . Sixty-three 'investigative' files on fifteen members of the *SWP*

and *YSA*. . . . Twenty-three quarterly 'field reports' on the *SWP* from 1968 to 1974. . . . Three ten-year 'summary reports' on the *SWP*, dated 1944, 1955, and 1965."³⁹

When the Supreme Court ruled finally that the government did not have to turn over to the *SWP*-*YSA* lawyers the files of sixteen of the "informants" it had had in the ranks of the party and youth group, Judge Griesa appointed former New York State Judge Charles Breitel a "special master" to look at the material and report to the court. Breitel asserted that among others, the following "conclusive presumptions" could be made: "In 1963 informers provided the *FBI* with diagrams of an *SWP* headquarters. The *FBI* requested the diagrams 'to facilitate clandestine entries to the *SWP* headquarters.' On one occasion (no date given) smoke bombs were thrown at a *YSA* gathering; 'the smoke bomb tossing was attributed to *FBI* activity.' On another occasion (no date given) shots were fired at a local *SWP* headquarters; 'the shooting was attributable to *FBI* activity.' In 1975 members of the *SWP* and *YSA* were attacked at a local *SWP* office by a group of young men; 'the activity was attributable to *FBI* activity.' Again in 1975 an *SWP* member was attacked while selling newspapers; 'the attack was attributable to *FBI* activity.'" The Breitel report also said that due to *FBI* efforts party members had been deprived of their apartments, speakers at *SWP* meetings had been arrested, and the spouse of an *SWP* member who was not a citizen had been deported.⁴⁰ The pretrial hearings brought out that between 1960 and 1976 the *FBI* had used 1,300 informers against the *SWP* and *YSA*, of whom three hundred were members of the two organizations. The most highly placed *SWP* figure implicated was Ed Heisler, who in 1980 confessed to the other *SWP* leaders that between 1967 and 1971 he had been a paid informer of the *FBI*. Between 1977 and 1979 he was a full member of the party's National Committee.⁴¹

The *SWP*-*YSA* court proceedings brought

President Gerald Ford's Attorney General Edward Levi to issue an order in September 1976 to call off all further surveillance of the two groups.⁴² However, there were indications in later years that FBI activities against the swp and ysa were continuing, and that other "intelligence" groups were conducting similar activity, including the CIA, Military, Naval, and Air Force Intelligence, as well as the Secret Service.⁴³

The Passing of the Older Leadership

During the 1970s the older generation of leaders of the Socialist Workers Party to a large degree passed from the scene. James P. Cannon, who had been from the inception of American Trotskyism its single most important figure, died in August 1974, at the age of eighty-four. At the time of his death Cannon was "national chairman emeritus" of the swp.⁴⁴

Four years earlier, on February 17, 1970, Vincent R. Dunne, also one of the founders of the American Trotskyist movement, and the most important figure in the Minneapolis teamsters' strike of 1934, had died.⁴⁵ He had already retired from any leadership role in the party.

One of the two or three most important figures in what might be called the second generation of leaders of American Trotskyism and the swp, Joseph Hansen, died on January 18, 1979. At the time of his death, Hansen was the editor of *Intercontinental Press*, which he and his wife, Reba, had founded about fifteen years earlier.⁴⁶

Two other members of Hansen's generation in swp leadership, Farrell Dobbs and George Novack, had largely removed themselves from active leadership positions in the swp by the end of the 1970s. Dobbs had retired as national secretary in 1972, and George Novack had largely withdrawn from political activities, centering much of his time on his writings about Marxist philosophy. His wife, Evelyn Reed, died in April 1979. Dobbs died in November 1983.

Finally, George Breitman, a fourth member of the Hansen-Novack-Dobbs generation, concentrated most of his time and attention during the 1970s and immediately afterward on his remarkable work of editing the correspondence and other works of Leon Trotsky. That fact and nagging ill health kept him from having a major role in the councils of the party during most of this period.

By the end of the 1970s, leadership of the Socialist Workers Party was largely in the hands of people who had entered it during the 1960s and afterward. They were of a generation who had been at most small children—if they had yet been born—when Trotsky was assassinated and had no memory of close association with Trotsky. This was a not unimportant factor in determining the direction in which they subsequently took the swp.

Splits Within the swp in 1970s

The Socialist Workers Party suffered no major splits during the 1970s. During the first half of the decade there existed at least three dissident groups within the party, two of which were expelled.

During the 1971 national convention of the swp two opposition groups fought against the party's general line at that time. One of these was the Proletarian Orientation Tendency. It was reported by a source unfriendly to the swp to have "centered its struggle against the swp's abandonment of a proletarian orientation, of its abandonment of viewing the working class as the revolutionary force in history. The Proletarian Orientation Tendency reaffirmed the role of the working class . . . called for the party to sink its roots into the class, and warned that with the abandonment of the class, the party would soon abandon the revolutionary program."⁴⁷

The majority within the Proletarian Orientation Tendency did not push their fight to the point of getting expelled. However,

a minority within the group established a separate Leninist Faction which continued the struggle. It was reported that "the Leninist Faction submitted four major documents to both the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International. These documents the swp refused to print and the FI did not acknowledge." The denouement was that "The Leninist Faction then resigned from the Socialist Workers Party on October 26, 1972, in order to form the Class Struggle League."⁴⁸

In their letter of resignation from the swp the members of the Leninist Faction wrote, "We have had regional meetings, a convention, and in the process have produced and distributed internally over 60,000 pages of literature. . . . We scrutinized the politics of every political grouping in the Trotskyist spectrum, and most importantly, began the systematic nationally directed task of industrial colonization. . . ."⁴⁹

The second dissident group at the 1971 convention of the swp was the Communist Tendency. It was reported by the same anti-swp source previously cited to have "stood on a principled Trotskyist program. . . . Analyzing and explaining the degeneration of the Fourth International, the Communist Tendency attacked the swp's program of nationalism, feminism and pacifism. The Communist Tendency fought for a return to the proletariat, but a return based on a Trotskyist program."⁵⁰ The Communist Tendency were expelled shortly after the 1971 convention. They thereupon split, one group joining the International Socialists, the other becoming part of another dissident Trotskyist group, the Vanguard Newsletter.⁵¹

The third dissident element within the swp during the 1970s was a small faction which sided with the Majority Group within the United Secretariat, in its controversy with the Socialist Workers Party after 1969. They formed the Internationalist Tendency (IT) and about one hundred members of this group were expelled from the swp on July 4, 1974.⁵²

The Internationalist Tendency originally had its origins in the Proletarian Orientation Tendency. Those who formed the IT did not leave the swp when a minority of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency did so to form the Class Struggle League in 1972. By the time of the party's 1978 convention the IT reportedly had 120 members in the swp-YSA. By that time they were affiliated with the International Majority Tendency within the United Secretariat, led by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank, and Livio Maitan.⁵³

The expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency became an issue in the swp's law suit against the U.S. government. The party offered documentation on the expulsion of the IT as supporting evidence to rebut government charges that the swp was "terrorist." After studying this material, Judge Griesa commented that "there was never anything in my view, beyond the most tenuous suggestion of a possible implication of violence in the United States. . . . In view of the ouster of the minority faction, I believe that tenuous suggestion has been basically eliminated."⁵⁴

A few months after the expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency from the swp, negotiations apparently took place between the swp leaders and the European heads of the International Majority Tendency for the return of those expelled to the Socialist Workers Party. Subsequently, many members of the IT were reaccepted.⁵⁵

SWP Positions on International Issues

The Socialist Workers Party devoted much of the space in its periodicals and the time of its leadership and rank and file in dealing with the party's positions on succeeding international crises of the 1970s. Although most of these positions were more or less "orthodox" Trotskyist, some caused controversy with other elements of the United Secretariat, and others led ultimately to the possibility of the swp's totally breaking with International Trotskyism.

For a number of years following the Ninth

World Congress of the United Secretariat (USEC) in 1969, the SWP led a struggle in the name of orthodox Trotskyism against the tendency of European leaders of the USEC to support the idea of guerrilla war rather than mass organization as the road to power. We deal extensively with this controversy elsewhere in this volume.

In the period following the end of the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship in Portugal the SWP was critical of virtually all elements participating in the revolution. Soon after the November 1975 attempt of the Communists to organize a coup with sympathetic elements in the Armed Forces Movement, *Intercontinental Press* wrote that "it was the workers who suffered most after the adventure of pro-CP officers and the 'extreme Left' on November 25. Various events of November 25 point to the leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties as those guilty in this adventure. The forces which consider themselves the 'revolutionary Left' also share a great part of the blame." The SWP periodical added that "the adventure of November 25, therefore, was not an attempt to go beyond the class collaborationist policy followed by the Stalinists and Social Democrats. Both have sought to keep the workers over whom they had influence subordinate to the military men, while they competed to prove how indispensable they were for the Portuguese capitalist class."⁵⁶

At the time of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia (Kampuchea) to overthrow the Khmer Rouge government of Pol Pot, the SWP argued that "with their eyes focused on the Vietnamese revolution, the imperialists were alarmed by the fall of the Pol Pot regime at the hands of Kampuchean rebels and the Vietnamese army. The imperialists are afraid that anti-capitalist advances made in Vietnam will be extended to Kampuchea. . . . The Vietnamese participated in the military campaign against the Pol Pot regime as a defensive measure." The SWP further explained that "The capitalist character of the Kampuchean regime explains why imperialist powers near Southeast Asia, such

as Australia, began to view the Pol Pot regime as a 'buffer between communist Vietnam and non-communist Thailand.' Vietnam was forced to act defensively in aiding Kampuchean rebels to overthrow Pol Pot and install a regime less hostile to Vietnam."⁵⁷

The Socialist Workers Party leadership reversed itself with regard to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. A resolution adopted by its Political Committee in January 1980 asserted that "the presence of Soviet troops, by barring the road to the counterrevolution, creates a new and more favorable situation. . . . if Soviet troops help the new regime score victories over the reactionaries, this takes pressure off the Afghan revolution and encourages and inspires the struggle for social revolution." However, in November 1980 the National Committee revised this position, adopting a resolution which stated that "the Soviet bureaucracy's occupation, like all of its preceding actions to prop up this government, did not give an impulse to independent initiative by the city workers or the peasants. . . . The Soviet troops were not greeted by the workers and peasants as reinforcements in the fight to advance their social and political goals. . . ." The National Committee also reversed the conclusion of the Political Committee in January to the effect that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan "strengthens the hand of the anti-imperialist fighters in Iran. And it even buys time for the revolutionary government in Nicaragua, halfway around the world. Needless to say, the impact will be great in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Turkey." The National Committee, in contrast declared that "Moscow's role has also negatively affected the class struggle in Iran and Pakistan. . . ."⁵⁸

In all its commentaries on Communist Party regimes of Europe and Asia, the Socialist Workers Party continued during the 1970s to enunciate the traditional Trotskyist position with regard to the nature of those regimes. A clear statement of this position appeared in *Young Socialist* in April 1979. It said that "in the aftermath of World

War II, capitalism was overthrown in Eastern Europe, China, North Korea and North Vietnam. In all of these countries, the governments are headed by privileged bureaucracies like that in the Soviet Union. Despite the charges which the Soviet and Chinese Stalinists hurl at each other, capitalism has not been restored in any of these countries. They remain workers states transitional between capitalism and socialism." This YSA statement went on to say that "Stalinism is not a necessary or inevitable feature of socialist revolution. The bureaucracies are basically parasites on the workers states, fulfilling no essential economic function. Their bureaucratic interests are opposed to the interests of the working masses. . . . The further progress of the workers states therefore requires a political revolution, one which will overthrow the bureaucrats and establish democratic forms of rule while maintaining the postcapitalist property forms."⁵⁹

In the case of the Iranian revolution the SWP at first greeted with enthusiasm the fall of the shah and the assumption of power by Ayatollah Khomeini. Several months before this happened, *The Militant* had words of praise for Khomeini, saying that "although Khomeini subscribes to a religious ideology, the basis of his appeal is not religious reaction. On the contrary, he has won broad support among the Iranian masses because his firm opposition to the Shah and the Shah's 'modernization' is progressive."⁶⁰ The assumption of power by Khomeini was greeted by *The Militant* with a headline, "Victory in Iran!"⁶¹ Although the SWP mounted extensive protests against arrest of their fellow Trotskyists by the Khomeini government, they continued to support the Khomeini-led regime. Thus, at the time of the seizure of the U.S. Embassy late in 1979, spokesmen for the party supported the move, putting complete blame for it on the Carter administration rather than on anyone in Iran.⁶²

At the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War in

October 1980 the SWP strongly supported Iran. David Frankel, in an article entitled "War in the Middle East: Why Socialists Back Iran," explained that "the Iranian workers and peasants are continuing their mass mobilizations, they are continuing to organize themselves and to engage in political discussion. Their revolution is still alive, it is still developing." He noted that both the Communist Tudeh Party and the Trotskyist *НКК* "put out legal newspapers and maintain public headquarters," and "Most important of all are the gains made by the masses of workers and peasants because of the revolution." Frankel had no comment on the theocracy which had been installed by the Khomeini regime.⁶³

The SWP supported the rise of Solidarity in Poland. However, the SWP leadership's reactions after the suppression of Solidarity at the end of 1981 became an issue of dispute in the factional struggle which was beginning to develop within the party at that time.

Finally, the SWP continued during the 1970s and thereafter its very strong support of the Castro regime in Cuba. It expressed equal enthusiasm for the Sandinista government which came to power in Nicaragua in the summer of 1979 and for the regime of Maurice Bishop which seized control of the Caribbean island of Grenada in early 1979.

Conclusion

During the early 1970s the Socialist Workers Party had reached the high point of its influence in a series of major movements which were then of importance in national politics. Thereafter, with the decline or reorientation of those movements, the SWP's influence declined. It met this new situation at the end of the decade by a new turn toward the organized labor movement, which it had largely ignored for almost two decades. However, after five years, there was relatively little to show for this "turn" in terms of membership or influence among the orga-

nized workers. Meanwhile, a new generation had largely taken over leadership. By the early 1980s that leadership was taking the party in a direction which threatened to separate it entirely from International Trotskyism.

U.S. Trotskyism: The SWP Purge of the Early 1980s and Its Aftermath

Between 1981 and 1984, the Socialist Workers Party experienced what was organizationally its most serious split in thirty years. From an ideological point of view this factional dispute and split—which took the form of large scale purge of individuals from the party—was the most serious division which the party had ever experienced, because it resulted in the Socialist Workers Party as an organization largely abandoning the ideas which had always characterized International Trotskyism.

Background of the Split

The relatively young people who by the early 1980s constituted the core of swp leadership had for the most part been drawn into the party twenty years before in the campaign in favor of the Castro Revolution. They had first been attracted into the Young Socialist Alliance and then to the swp by the unequivocal support of the Castro Revolution and by the swp's early characterization of the Castro regime as a "workers' state," supposedly devoid of most of the more unsavory aspects of other existing workers' states. The swp from the early 1960s refused to qualify the Cuban regime as "degenerated" or "deformed," as it characterized all of the European and Asian Communist Party-controlled regimes. It fought polemical battles with other elements in International Trotskyism to maintain this position.

Thus, the Socialist Workers Party even when it was still led by such old-timers as Farrell Dobbs and Joseph Hansen had been the most uncritical supporter of the Cuban

Communist regime among the major national organizations associated with any of the factions of International Trotskyism. This is an important factor behind the "Castroite" evolution of the SWP in the early 1980s.

Another element which undoubtedly contributed to the drift of the SWP leadership away from Trotskyism, orthodox or otherwise, was the general orientation of the party during the 1960s and early 1970s (upon which we have commented). During that period in which the SWP leaders of the early 1980s came to maturity and began to emerge as party leaders, the political work of the party was centered on middle-class movements against the Vietnam War, for black nationalism, for feminism and gay rights. During that period, it will be recalled, the SWP argued that the new wave of revolution was coming from such middle-class groups as these and not from the working class, to which the party paid almost no attention.

Even when the Socialist Workers Party began to take a somewhat more orthodox Trotskyist position with its "turn to industry" beginning in 1978-79, it carried out that turn in the face of objective conditions and with policies which virtually assured that the change would bring scanty results in terms of increased membership or influence. In these circumstances the party was increasingly converted into a purely propaganda group, concentrating principally on foreign issues—the merits of the Cuban regime and all its works, the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada in the Caribbean, and the Khomeini revolution in Iran.

Beginning of Ideological Deviation

In retrospect the new SWP oppositionists traced the beginning of the leadership's deviation from Trotskyism to the party's 1980 Educational Conference at Oberlin, where, they argued, Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters gave speeches which presaged this change. However, during the party's inter-

national discussion preceding the 1981 SWP convention the leadership "denied that they had embarked upon a path away from Trotskyism and the Fourth International."

It was only after the 1981 convention that the principal members of the party leadership began frankly to turn away from Trotskyism. At a Political Committee meeting two days after the close of the convention several party leaders delivered reports on "historical researches" which they had been engaged in. Subsequently, the Opposition characterized these as "an open attack . . . upon the theoretical traditions which our movement has defended since the founding of the American Left Opposition in 1928."

During the next year and a half the party leaders published a number of articles and public speeches which elaborated upon their deviance from Trotskyism. The first of these was an article in November 1981 in the *International Socialist Review (ISR)* by Doug Jenness, entitled "How Lenin Saw the Russian Revolution," which was followed by another article by Jenness in the *ISR* in June 1982 entitled "Our Political Continuity with Bolshevism." These articles provoked an international polemic with Ernest Mandel, and we report more extensively on this polemic in another section of this book. Here it is enough to note that Jenness, in his first article praised the slogan of Lenin before 1917 of "a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry," which he said "effectively armed the Bolsheviks to carry through their historic task." Trotsky, of course, had opposed that slogan, and always claimed that Lenin in his "Theses" of April 1917 had come over to Trotsky's point of view on the question, thus facilitating the merger of his own group with the Bolsheviks.

In his second article Jenness more frankly attacked the theory of permanent revolution, perhaps the most fundamental ideological tenet of Trotskyism. He argued that if the Bolsheviks had adhered to Trotsky's ideas that would have "increased the likeli-

hood that the party would have failed to take power in October 1917." He also attacked Trotsky for "underestimation of the peasantry," and he brushed aside Trotsky's old contention that Lenin in April 1917 had come around to Trotsky's position on these two issues.

The attack on the Trotsky tradition continued at the swp Plenum in December 1982. There, Barry Sheppard presented a report in which he gave it as his "personal view" that "Trotsky had developed an incorrect and sectarian understanding of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27."¹

The ideological position which the leadership proposed to advocate in place of Trotskyism was put forward at the party's 1982 Educational Conference. The session's public report noted that

because of the central role it plays in world politics and in the development of a Marxist vanguard on an international scale, revolutionary Cuba was the subject of a separate talk by Mary-Alice Waters. Waters explained that Cuba follows a working-class internationalist foreign policy designed to advance the anti-imperialist struggle and the world socialist revolution. . . . The Cuban Communist Party's revolutionary course is also manifested in the domestic policies it follows within Cuba, Waters said. The Cuban leaders have waged a consistent struggle to mobilize the working class against tendencies toward bureaucratism, and have consciously promoted and led an increasing participation by the Cuban masses in governing society.²

It is significant that the report on this July-August 1982 meeting, which appeared in both *The Militant* and *Intercontinental Press*, although containing numerous references to Marx, Engels, and Lenin, did not have a single reference to Trotsky or to the historically Trotskyist nature of the Socialist Workers Party.

The orientation toward Castroism as "the

center of the world revolution" had been foreshadowed considerably before the 1982 Educational Conference. In the draft political resolution submitted by the leadership to the 1981 swp convention, there had been a call for a "new mass Leninist International."³ This process of moving away from Trotskyism was summarized in a very long speech—thirty pages of small print—by swp National Secretary Jack Barnes to a convention of the Young Socialist Alliance on December 31, 1982. In it Barnes expressed the first priority the swp leaders gave to the Castro revolution, repudiated basic Trotskyist doctrines, and largely dissociated the swp from International Trotskyism.

Barnes started by saying that "the center of the class struggle today is the showdown with imperialism over the extension of the socialist revolution in the Caribbean and Central America. . . . Central America and the Caribbean are today the front line in this ongoing struggle between the exploiters and the toilers."⁴ He devoted much of his speech to repudiating Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution. He summed up his argument thus: "Trotsky's insistence on tracing the continuity of the Fourth International to his theory of permanent revolution going back to the pre-1917 period, reinforced rather than counterbalanced any tendency of his supporters, both in his time and in ours, to err in a sectarian direction on the peasant and national question. As we have seen, the programmatic continuity of communism on both the weight of the alliance with the peasantry, and of revolutionary nationalist movements, goes back to Lenin's pre-1917 positions captured in his formula of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, not to Trotsky's alternative perspective of the permanent revolution."⁵ In this document, Barnes implicitly rejected—or ignored—the claim of Trotsky and his followers that in his April Theses of 1917, Lenin had in fact come over to Trotsky's point of view.

Barnes explained that the change of their

point of view by the SWP leaders derived from the establishment in 1978 of a "leadership school" by the party. There, the leaders had first profoundly studied Marx's and Engels's writings, then those of Lenin, and finally the documents of the first four congresses of the Communist International. He confessed that "we discovered a Lenin and a political continuity that we had not known."⁶ These studies took place together with the "turn to industry." As a consequence of both phenomena, Barnes said, "We recognized and embraced the emergence of proletarian leaderships of socialist revolutions in this hemisphere, and placed defense of those revolutions at the center of our political activity."⁷

Barnes professed to see "the political convergence of revolutionary forces, of communists who have their origin in different experiences and traditions. . . . We are part of a political convergence of forces on a world scale, committed to carry out and defend the socialist revolution, subordinating all other considerations to its extension. For this, the Fourth International has today the best opportunity in its history to advance the perspective which it has defended for half a century: construction of a Communist and mass International." He went on to indicate what he considered the core of this process of regroupment: "The leaderships of the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions represent the revival on the level of proletarian parties in power—of genuine communism. These are leaderships that practice proletarian internationalism. . . ."⁸

Barnes clearly no longer considered the Fourth International to be "the party of the world socialist revolution," as Trotsky had labeled it. Barnes wrote that "the perspective opened up by the revolutionary leaderships in Central America and the Caribbean for a fusion of the forces struggling to build communist parties points the way *politically* towards a new international working class movement—the goal of conscious proletarian revolutionists since 1848. The mass

world revolutionary organization does not yet exist, and it is not right around the corner. But that is the direction of motion. And that is why the stakes are so high for us in learning from and contributing to the process of political discussion and clarification that, at whatever price, can lay the groundwork for a new mass, communist international."⁹

Barnes furthermore showed very considerable contempt for International Trotskyism. He said that "in fact, a substantial number of organizations which label themselves Trotskyist are hopeless, irredeemable sectarians. Probably 80 percent of those on a world scale who present themselves as Trotskyist—maybe it's 70 percent, maybe 90 percent—are unreformable sectarians."¹⁰

Finally, Barnes even rejected the name "Trotskyist." He commented, "most of us will not call our movement 'Trotskyist' before this decade is out, just as Trotsky never did. We in the Socialist Workers Party, like Trotsky, are Communists."¹¹

The SWP leadership also broke with past positions of the party on important current issues. Two of these were of particular significance—the attitude toward the Solidarity movement in Poland and that toward the Iranian Revolution. The periodical issued by one of the dissident factions of the party described the change in position with regard to events in Poland. It wrote that "in 1981 it was clear the SWP did not want to be too prominent in support of the Polish workers—this might embarrass the party in its relationships with revolutionaries in Central America who did not agree with this policy . . . the SWP . . . held only a few pro forma meetings of its own." The periodical went on to note that the traditional SWP position with regard to the "workers' states" had been "for 'political revolution,' that is, to state that the restoration of workers democracy is possible only through the removal of the bureaucrats by revolutionary means while preserving the social advances made possible through property nationaliza-

tions." However, the newspaper added, "Shortly after the beginning of 1982, this concept also virtually disappeared from *The Militant*, the newspaper reflecting the swp's viewpoint. In its place ambiguous formulas appeared that could be interpreted as calling merely for the reform of the Polish CP."¹²

The swp leadership's position on the Khomeini regime is reflected in an article by Cindy Jaquith, "U.S. Left and the Iraq-Iran War," published in *The Militant* and *Intercontinental Press*. She wrote that "An Iranian victory in the war would be an inspiration for all those fighting imperialist oppression in the Mideast; a defeat for Iran would be a big blow, not only for the Iranian revolution, but for the Iraqi masses, for the Palestinian, Lebanese and other Arab peoples, as well as for working people around the world. Both Iraq and Iran are semicolonial nations oppressed by imperialism, and both are ruled by capitalist governments that are hostile to the interests of the workers and peasants. By attacking the rights of workers, peasants, oppressed nationalities, and women, the Iranian regime has dealt significant blows to the gains of the revolution. But it has not *crushed* the revolution, as can be seen by the massive mobilization of Iranians today to defend their revolution from Iraqi attack."¹³

As for the clerical and theocratic nature of the Khomeini regime, Cindy Jaquith noted that "when the demonstrators counterposed 'Islam' to life under the Shah, they were expressing the nationalism and hatred of imperialism felt by Muslims and other oppressed peoples throughout the Middle East. Religious leaders gained popularity among the demonstrators to the degree they gave voice to these nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiments."¹⁴ She summed up the swp position by saying that

The principal contribution that U.S. workers can make to the struggle of Iranian working people is helping them get the imperialists off their backs. . . . In this

context of *defending* the Iranian revolution from imperialist attack, U.S. labor should also support workers and peasants in Iran whose democratic rights are under attack from the government there. These attacks weaken the revolution in the face of imperialist-inspired aggression. The repression against the Tudeh Party, supporters of the Fourth International, and other currents in the working class must be opposed. Finally, the U.S. workers movement should go on a campaign to repudiate the lies about the Iranian revolution and its goals. Spreading the truth about the revolution is the best aid U.S. workers can give to advancing it.¹⁵

The different attitude of the swp on current issues was also shown in its position toward Soviet dissidents. An article by Doug Jenness on the Sakharov case argued that "Sakharov is a particularly attractive figure for the imperialists to rally around because his procapitalist, proimperialist, and anti-Soviet views have been well-publicized."

Jenness's position on the Sakharov case did not reflect the traditional Trotskyite argument in favor of "political revolution" in the Soviet Union and other Communist-controlled regimes. He said that "the treatment of Sakharov and Bonner deserves the condemnation of working class organizations everywhere. It is necessary for the working class both to expose the hypocrisy and counter-revolutionary aims of the imperialist propaganda campaign and to criticize the Kremlin's attacks on democratic rights. This is the way to help advance the socialist revolution throughout the world and defend the workers state established by the working people of Russia more than sixty years ago."¹⁶

The Beginning of the Opposition

All of these moves away from Trotskyism were taken without any general discussion in the ranks of the Socialist Workers Party.

There was no submission to the membership for general discussion or debate of formal resolutions or other documents proposing basic changes in the ideology of the SWP. No forum was presented for presentation of counter documents or arguments, except the plenums of the National Committee. Even that kind of presentation became increasingly difficult for the Opposition.

An opposition to the Jack Barnes leadership began to form even before the 1981 party convention. It consisted of two elements. One was the "Trotskyist Tendency" led by Nat Weinstein and Lynn Henderson, and had its principal base in California. The other was the Fourth Internationalist Caucus, based mainly in New York, with Steve Bloom, Frank Lovell and George Breitman as its major spokesmen. There were more than two dozen internal discussion bulletins published in the three months before the 1981 convention, and the proportional representation system then in operation in the party gave both opposition groups an appreciable representation at the convention.¹⁷

After the 1981 convention the Trotskyist Tendency ostensibly dissolved, supposedly to conform to party norms and discipline.¹⁸ The growing split in the SWP continued in the November 1981 Plenum of the National Committee, however. A statement issued afterward by the Fourth Internationalist Caucus summed up the situation at the plenum by saying, "Our November plenum revealed divergent political tendencies in the National Committee which reflect disagreements developing in the party as a whole. One tendency, represented by the majority, finds expression in the motions and reports that were adopted at the plenum. Another is expressed in the proposals submitted by the authors of this letter, which were voted down. A third tendency also exists, represented at our national convention last August by Comrades Weinstein and Henderson."¹⁹

This statement was signed by Steve Bloom and Frank Lovell. It severely criti-

cized the party's attitudes toward the Solidarity movement in Poland, toward the Khomeini government in Iran, and toward the general tendency of the party majority to move away from traditional Trotskyist positions.²⁰

The controversy intensified. At the February-March 1982 Plenum of the National Committee there were presented "dozens of motions aimed at forcing minority supporters to 'cease and desist' from any 'unauthorized' political discussion or collaboration. The internal bulletin issued . . . to the membership had to be priced at \$8.00 to fit it all in."²¹

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency moved to form a national faction in June 1982. The call for formation of such a group was issued by eighteen party members "in order to participate collectively in the international discussion and to advance our views on disputed international questions in an organized and responsible way," in preparation for the next United Secretariat world congress.²²

Although such a call for formation of a national faction in connection with a forthcoming national convention or international congress had until then been considered more or less normal, the signers of the call to form the Fourth Internationalist Tendency were ordered to "cease and desist." They proceeded to do so, not going any further at that time in setting up an organized caucus.²³

Two plenums of the SWP National Committee were held during the middle months of 1983. At the first of these, in May, the four Opposition members of the Central Committee, Steve Bloom and Frank Lovell for the New York-based faction and Nat Weinstein and Lynn Henderson for the California-based group, presented jointly two documents for discussion at the meeting. One was "A Platform to Overcome the Crisis in the Party," which detailed at some length the changes which had been brought about in the ideology of the party by the majority leadership and reasserted alle-

giance to the party's traditional positions. The other, "28 Theses on the American Socialist Revolution and the Building of the Revolutionary Party," was an extensive critique of the world and national situation in terms of the traditional Trotskyist positions.²⁴

At the next plenum in August 1983, the four opposition members again prepared two documents for presentation to the meeting. One was entitled "Resolving the International Crisis of Revolutionary Leadership Today." It reiterated the current United Secretariat position of the close interrelationship among the revolutionary movement in the developing countries and in the industrial nations, and the political revolution in the "workers states," and had extensive commentaries on each of these.²⁵

The other document submitted by the four oppositionists was entitled "New Norms vs. Old: The Erosion of Proletarian Democracy in the *swp*." It dealt particularly with the purge of oppositionists which was then well under way in the Socialist Workers Party.

The four oppositionists were not able to present these documents to the August 1983 meeting. They were by that time "suspended" from the party.

The Purge

From 1982 until early in 1984 there was a widespread purge of the party carried out by the *swp* leadership. Starting at first on a local level, it was expanded between August 1983 and January 1984 to include all of the principal opposition figures, meaning virtually all of those remaining from the leadership generations predating the group which was by 1982 in control of the party.

There would seem to be little doubt that the group which then controlled the *swp* leadership was ready from the onset of the controversy over their new ideological position to get rid of anyone who openly objected to it. In his appeal against his expulsion from the party, written in April 1984, George

Breitman said that "the central leadership team began talking about a split the day after the last convention in August 1981. In September 1981, two of its representatives, Ken Shilman and Mae Warren, told Les Evans in Minnesota, who was then a supporter of the majority group, that the leadership in New York expected the party membership (then near 1,300) to be thinned down to 850 before the next convention. . . ."²⁶

In retrospect, the oppositionists dated the beginning of the purge from the plenum of the National Committee which took place in February—March 1982. At that point the majority leadership established the "juridical" basis for expelling those whom they wanted to be rid of. Basing themselves on a 1965 document, "Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party," they set forth a long list of things which party members were not permitted to do. Some twenty-seven "motions on party norms" were passed at that meeting.²⁷

In their August 1983 document, "New Norms vs. Old: The Erosion of Proletarian Democracy in the *swp*," the four oppositionist members of the National Committee argued that "the 1965 organizational document did not intend to set forth a rigid legal code. The February—March 1982 plenum abused the spirit of that resolution by turning the general principles it articulated into an ossified list of 'thou-shalt-nots.' Subsequent practice has shown that even unintended transgressions of the commandments as interpreted by the party leadership—or still worse, even imagined transgressions—lead to summary expulsion. The expulsion procedures themselves have exhibited a quality of justice that completely fails to protect the basic rights of party members."²⁸

The oppositionists argued that a distinction should be made between a "norm" and a hard-and-fast rule in the party. They argued that

it is, of course, correct to say that under ordinary circumstances it is *normal* (i.e.

a norm) for internal party groupings to dissolve after the end of a discussion, and for new internal groupings to wait until regularly constituted discussion periods. But these are *norms*, not rigid *laws* carved in stone. . . . It is also *normal* for the party leadership to present its thinking on all major questions to the party as a whole during the course of the regularly constituted discussion period and not wait for the day after the close of the convention to launch a major revision of our basic program. It is this *abnormal* action by the central party leadership which created the necessity for the reopening of discussion and the pressure for formation of internal groupings in the party in an *abnormal* fashion. . . .²⁹

Certainly the purge got under way after the March—April 1982 Plenum of the National Committee. Individuals in branches in various parts of the country were expelled on a variety of grounds. Others suspected of not agreeing with the new positions of the party leadership were encouraged to resign. The statement of the opposition on "New Norms vs. Old" submitted to the August 1983 Plenum noted that "for those comrades too confused and disoriented to make the break themselves, a new effort has been launched to help them leave the party. Certain dropouts have been hailed as 'model' resignations to be emulated. In some places branch committees have been formed to encourage opposition comrades to leave, and threaten them with disciplinary action if they don't."³⁰

The nature of the charges brought against those who were being expelled or forced to resign is seen in the cases of seven of the eighteen people who had in June 1982 issued a call for formation of a "Fourth Internationalist Tendency" to organize participation in the discussion preceding the scheduled 1983 convention of the swp and the scheduled 1984 congress of the United Secretariat. Although they had desisted from organizing

the tendency when ordered to do so by the national swp leadership, seven of the eighteen had been expelled by mid-1983.

The charges on which these people were expelled or reasons for resigning were summed up by Naomi Allen, George Breiman and George Saunders, after their own expulsion, in a letter to the United Secretariat. They listed them:³¹

Anne Teasdale Zukowski—expelled for answering a question by a non-party YSA member; . . .

Dianne Feeley—expelled for organizing an International Women's Day event, allegedly 'behind the back of the party';

David Walsh—resigned after being denied a leave of absence for medical reasons;

Paul LeBlanc—expelled for statements made at an swp branch meeting;

Les Evans—expelled for alleged "inactivity" and "financial boycott" ;

Larry Cooperman—expelled for alleged "unauthorized discussions" with a non-party YSA member;

Elias Ramírez—expelled for allegedly "endangering the security of the party" when he applied for a transfer to another branch and asked a question at his branch meeting about the Hector Marroquín defense. . . .

The purge process reached a high point at the August 1983 Plenum of the swp's National Committee. A subsequent statement by the Political Bureau on January 21, 1984, first published in the *Party Organizer*, noted that "at its meeting in August 1983 the National Committee suspended four National Committee members—Lovell, Weinstein, Henderson and Bloom—from the party for their secret factional activity. At the same meeting, the National Committee noted that these four National Committee members were responsible for a split operation that had been directed against the party for some time. This operation included both individual resignations and flagrant viola-

tions of party discipline and organizational principles resulting in expulsions."³² Later in this same statement, the Political Bureau explained the somewhat strange basis of the August 1983 Plenum's actions. It said that "at its August meeting, the National Committee upheld the party's organizational principles when it suspended Bloom, Henderson, Lovell and Weinstein for refusing to inform the National Committee of the differences among them that led to the disintegration of their faction. This disloyal cover-up was a particularly flagrant act of contempt for the party since each wing blamed the disintegration on the other, in identical terms. The National Committee pointed to the insistence of the four on keeping their platform differences secret as proof of a secret factional operation against the party and the Fourth International. . . . The unconditional suspension from the party of the leaders of the split operation was unambiguous final warning to every single one of its adherents."³³

After their "suspension," the four former National Committee members issued on September 7, 1963, a document entitled "Sound the Alarm," which was directed "To All sections, Sympathizing Groups, and Members of the Fourth International." It proclaimed that "the organizational measures carried out by the SWP leadership are not only undemocratic, they amount to a de facto and unprincipled split which the majority leadership is solely responsible for engineering. We, the undersigned four suspended National Committee members, state categorically that we are opposed to any such split. We will fight for our reinstatement into the party and the National Committee, and for the opening of a free and democratic discussion of the differences. We will advocate a reversal of the current destructive course and a return to the historic program of the SWP."³⁴

At its next plenum in November 1983 the National Committee continued its moves against the opposition. According to the Po-

litical Bureau Statement of January 21, 1984, already cited, "the National Committee noted that the four suspended NC members had launched a public organization, Socialist Action. . . . The National Committee further decided that membership in, affiliation to, support to, or collaboration with the Socialist Action or any of its members, unless authorized by the National Committee, is incompatible with membership in the SWP."³⁵

Finally, as that same Political Bureau Statement noted, "On December 22, 1983, the Political Committee initiated action to bring the split operation to an immediate end. The action was completed in the first part of January by which time all the members of the secret faction still operating inside the party had been expelled." The December Committee meeting also voted to "draw up a list of minority supporters in every branch, prepare questions to be put to them and organize Political Committee delegations to meet with every individual on the list as rapidly as possible."³⁶

The mechanism devised for carrying out this purge was ingenious and nearly unique. It centered on what had happened or allegedly happened at a California state convention on December 3-4, 1983. At that meeting there were five oppositionist delegates. They presented a minority report on the main document debated at the convention. According to the Political Bureau Statement of January 21, 1984, the person who presented that report "put forward a split perspective of political support for and intent to collaborate with Socialist Action and its individual members." It added that "no minority delegate took the floor at any time during the convention to repudiate the split course advanced by their elected reporter; all voted for the general line of the minority report."³⁷

However, the oppositionists themselves argued that their position at the convention, particularly that of Michael Schreiber, the major spokesman for the minority, had been quite different from that reported by the ma-

majority leadership. He had indeed argued that the members of Socialist Action were still Trotskyists, and gave as an example of this a pamphlet they had issued on the Grenada situation. Furthermore, when the opposition delegates had been attacked for their political opinions, and motions had been introduced to investigate Schreiber's and Marc Rich's "willingness to abide by decisions of the National Committee. . . ." both Rich and Schreiber replied: "Marc Rich clearly stated he had always abided by party discipline and would continue to do so. He pointed out that it was no breach of discipline or loyalty to get up in front of a convention and state an *opinion* although, as he explained, he had phrased his feelings in a heated and exaggerated manner. Michael Schreiber defended his right to state his personal opinions in front of the delegates in accord with norms long practiced in the swp."

As for the failure of the other minority delegates "to repudiate the split course" of Schreiber, Evelyn Sell, one of those involved, said that "the other three seated minority delegates attempted to take the floor but the chair recognized only one from San Francisco who had not previously spoken under any agenda point."³⁸

Right after the California convention all opposition members of the swp in that state resigned or expelled. The Political Bureau Statement of January 21, 1984, described this process: "During the next few days, however, every single member in California who had voted for the minority resolution prior to the convention refused to repudiate the disloyal action of the minority delegates. Charges were filed against each of these comrades. At its meeting of December 10 the California State Committee tried and expelled sixteen members for disloyalty. On December 17 two more members were found guilty by the state Political Bureau of the same charges and expelled. One other member who had voted for the minority resolution resigned."³⁹

Following the December 22 Political Committee meeting, the leadership moved quickly to rid the party of anyone who had been identified during the last three years with opposition to the positions and policies of the swp leadership. The people on the list of dissidents drawn up at the December 22 meeting were presented with a prepared form which they were requested to sign, or they would be expelled. This statement said that the person involved repudiated "the action of the entire minority delegation to the California State Convention in refusing to repudiate the split statements of minority reporter Michael Schreiber. . . ."

Most of those presented with this ultimatum refused to sign the document. The statement of Bill Onasch of Minneapolis in a letter to the Political Committee dated January 2, 1984, was representative of the position taken by most of those involved. Onasch wrote that "first of all, my repudiation would imply that I have some responsibility for persons or events at the California State Convention. I, of course, accept no responsibility for any conduct or inaction by anyone at all—majority or minority—at the California convention, I do not know Michael Schreiber and to my knowledge, have never communicated with him about anything whatever at any time. I have not spoken with any California comrades—either majority or minority—about the events before, during or after the convention."

Onasch went on, "I not only have no responsibility for the California convention, I have no reliable facts about that convention. Other than the brief article which appeared in *The Militant*, Comrades Stone and Sheppard's synopsis delivered to me is my only source of knowledge. . . . I would never lend my name to a repudiation of other comrades solely on the basis of remarks by Comrades Stone and Sheppard." Onasch indicated that he, too, was opposed to collaboration with Socialist Action. "I made it clear to Comrades Stone and Sheppard that if anyone was taking the position that party members

could collaborate with Socialist Action without approval from the party, that I thought that was unacceptable. I, of course, believe the party has the right—and as a Leninist organization, the obligation—to regulate its members' relations with other political groups. I have always abided by that principle, and I have supported disciplinary actions against those who have consciously violated that principle in the past. I was told this was not sufficient. I must sign the prepared statements because we are dealing with *splitters!* . . . ⁴⁰

The Political Committee Statement of January 21, 1984, summed up what had been "accomplished" since the December 22 meeting. It said that "the Political Committee considered each case separately and reviewed whatever statement had been submitted by each comrade charged. The Political Committee expelled each of those found guilty of 'disloyalty for refusing to repudiate the action of the members of the minority delegation at the California state convention, each of whom refused to repudiate their reporter's split statement of intent to collaborate with Socialist Action and its individual members.' With these actions to bring the splitting operation inside the party to its conclusion, the Political Committee has carried through what amounts to a re-registration of the party membership."⁴¹

The final act of the split inside the swp took place at the National Convention of the party in August 1984. That convention had been postponed for a year, while the purge was being carried out. Bill Onasch, writing in the periodical of one of the factions of the expelled members, reported that "the first point on the convention agenda was 'appeals' [this was a 'closed' session, open only to delegates]. There were dozens of expulsions of oppositionists from the swp during the three years between conventions. Weeks before the convention the swp National Committee sent out individual letters to the expelled saying that the convention would consider their appeals and if the

delegates decided they wanted to hear appeals in person, those persons would be notified by 'telegram.' "

However, as Onasch noted, no oppositionists were called before the convention to defend themselves. Nor was any reply given the Fourth Internationalist Tendency's request that ex-National Committee members Steve Bloom and Frank Lovell be allowed to appear. He noted that "no report was made to convention guests as to the outcome of the appeals point. Only two weeks later did individuals receive letters from the swp NC informing us that the convention had rejected our appeals."⁴²

Aftermath of the Purge

In the wake of the great purge of 1982-1984, three separate groups were formed by those who were thrown out of or resigned from the swp. The divisions among these groups had already developed during the struggle against the swp leadership, and once outside the Socialist Workers Party they reacted rather differently to what had happened to them and to Trotskyism in the United States.

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency

At least in the period immediately following their expulsion from the swp, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency took the time-honored Trotskyist position of functioning and seeing themselves as an "opposition" within the U.S. Trotskyist movement, rather than as a separate party from the swp. This very much influenced the kind of activity they engaged in.

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency had its origins in the Fourth Internationalist Caucus, "a political tendency in the National Committee of the swp, consisting of Steve Bloom and Frank Lovell, and established after the 1981 Plenum of the National Committee. Its organization had been announced formally in a letter by Bloom and

Lovell to the SWP National Committee dated December 23, 1981.⁴³ The setting up of that caucus was followed late in June 1982 by the issuance of a call by eighteen SWP members to establish within the party the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, to participate in discussions leading up to the next SWP and United Secretariat meetings."⁴⁴ The Political Bureau of the SWP replied to this call by a letter of July 13, 1982, which said "we instruct you to cease and desist from any further organized tendency activity of any kind. Any violation of this instruction is incompatible with membership in the SWP." That instruction was ratified by the August 1982 Plenum.

As Naomi Allen, George Breitman, and George Saunders wrote a year and a half later, "As a result, the eighteen—who wished to remain in the SWP—had no alternative but to comply with the prohibition. The FIT never had a single meeting, and did not produce any document other than its original brief statement."⁴⁵

In the 1983 plenums of the National Committee, the future FIT members, Bloom and Lovell, worked together with Nat Weinstein and Lynn Henderson, who were later to take the lead in forming the Socialist Action group. As we have noted, they presented several documents to those meetings criticizing the ideology and practice of the SWP leadership group.

It was not until after the "California Convention Purge" at the end of December 1983 and the beginning of January 1984, as a result of which all sympathizers with the FIT point of view had been eliminated from the SWP, that a formal organization was established by them. A first step was the publication in December 1983 of the first number of a new, largely mimeographed periodical, *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, under the editorship of Frank Lovell. It presented a number of documents from the SWP internal struggle, particularly dealing with the involvement of the United Secretariat in the conflict.

The third issue of the *Bulletin*, that of February 1984, carried a letter from Naomi Allen, George Breitman, and George Saunders addressed to the United Secretariat, announcing the "Reintroduction of call for Fourth Internationalist Tendency." In this letter they summed up their perspective of functioning as an "opposition" to the SWP rather than as a separate political organization, at least for some time. They stated this "opposition" stance thus: "In addition to positions explained in the specific documents . . . we also believed that only the SWP membership can have the last word concerning the direction the party should take. That word remains to be spoken. . . . It will require a *decisive* test of the party ranks before anyone can correctly conclude that this heritage has been effectively destroyed by the anti-Leninist policies and revisionism of the current leadership. We remain, as we have always been, loyal to the SWP. We will continue to try to build the party, and convince the party membership of the need to return to the historical program of revolutionary Marxism, which is being abandoned by the present leadership. . . ."⁴⁶

The fourth number of the *Bulletin* carried the announcement of an Editorial Board, consisting of Naomi Allen, Steve Bloom, George Breitman, Frank Lovell, Sarah Lovell, Bill Onasch, Christine Frank Onasch, George Saunders, Evelyn Sell, Rita Shaw, Adam Shils, Larry Stewart, Jean Tussey, and George Lavan Weissman.⁴⁷

This same issue carried an unsigned article entitled "Fourth Internationalist Tendency is Organized Nationally." It reported that a meeting February 3–5 in Minneapolis had resulted in establishing a formal structure for the FIT. With local committees in nine cities, the group elected a National Organizing Committee and three national coordinators (Steve Bloom, Bill Onasch, and Evelyn Sell). This article also proclaimed:

The FIT does not want to put any organizational barriers in the way of the necessary

discussion of political program with the members of the swp. We are *not* trying to build a new organization in opposition to or as a substitute for the swp. We have, however, been forced to organize ourselves outside the party because we have been bureaucratically expelled. . . . The FIT campaigns for readmission into the party of our tendency members and of all others unjustly expelled for their political views as part of the leadership purge. We have endorsed the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* which was started in December by Frank Lovell, and we will continue to publish it and other materials as our major contribution to the discussion in the swp and the Fourth International.⁴⁸

Throughout 1984 the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* continued to deal principally with issues involving the purge of the Socialist Workers Party. The only "outside" activity reflected in its pages was two articles on the Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, which met in Cleveland on September 16. Even the article dealing with the Cleveland conference discussed at some length the allegedly negative role played by swp delegates to the meeting.⁴⁹

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency officially endorsed the swp's presidential and vice presidential candidates in the 1984 election.⁵⁰

Socialist Action

The second group to emerge from the 1982-84 split in the Socialist Workers Party was Socialist Action. It was organized around the tendency which had followed National Committee members Nat Weinstein and Lynn Henderson.

Socialist Action was formally established at a conference in Chicago in October 1983. In the first issue of its periodical, a printed monthly newspaper *Socialist Action*, the editors announced that "it was initiated by

a group of long-time socialists and activists in the antiwar, women's liberation, and union movements who had been expelled from the Socialist Workers Party in the course of the last two years."⁵¹ This article noted that "while we are no longer members of the swp, both we and the swp are sympathizers of the same world movement. Moreover, it is a movement in which our perspective holds a strong majority, although the relationship of forces is reversed here in the United States. We would like to see all supporters of the Fourth International in the United States belong to a single organization. To express that idea we have decided to organize ourselves as a public faction of the swp, since it is the larger of the two groups in this country that are in solidarity with the Fourth International."⁵²

The first number of *Socialist Action* did not note the names of the editorial board or of the National Committee of the Socialist Action organization. However, it mentioned that one National Committee member was Jake Coover, one of the eighteen Trotskyists tried in Minneapolis under the Smith Act during World War II, who had been expelled from the swp in 1982.⁵³ The first issue of *Socialist Action's* newspaper indicated that the organization had local groups in Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco.⁵⁴

The difference in focus between *Socialist Action* and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency was indicated in the editor's statement by the comment that "it is not our intention in future issues of *Socialist Action* to dwell on differences within the Socialist Workers Party."⁵⁵ They were as good as their word in that same issue. Aside from the three-page article on "Why Socialist Action Formed—Who We Are, What We Stand For," the paper dealt with "outside" issues, including the Greyhound bus strike then in progress, the U.S. invasion of Grenada, Polish Solidarity, and the PLO's leadership crisis.

As publication of *Socialist Action* contin-

ued, it became clear who were the people who were putting out the newspaper and leading the political organization of which it was the official organ. The June 1984 number of the newspaper had as editor Alan Benjamin; Mark Harris, and Michael Schreiber as associate editors, Nancy Gruber as managing editor, and Kay Curry as business manager. The editorial board consisted of Les Evans, Dianne Feeley, Jeff Mackler, Jim Richter, and Nat Weinstein. The staff was made up of Paul Colvin, Larry Cooperman, Robin David, May May Gong, Millie González, Hayden Perry, Linda Ray, Phil Ruble, Joe Ryan, Kwame M. A. Somburu, Marion Syrek, and Sylvia Weinstein.⁵⁶

From this list and other names figuring in the publications of Socialist Action, it is clear that the new group consisted in part of the second generation of leadership of American Trotskyism—the generation of Joseph Hansen. But it also included a sprinkling of the first generation, such as Jake Coover, as well as some people of the generation to which the current leaders of the Socialist Workers Party themselves belonged.

Socialist Action organized as essentially a new Trotskyist party. At its second National Committee Plenum in August 1984, which was "attended by the full National Committee of twenty-three members as well as by branch organizers and invited guests from around the world," it decided to hold its first national convention in November. As had been customary in the swp, Socialist Action held a period of preliminary discussion and it was announced that "during this period the membership of the organization will be engaged in a wide-ranging discussion of strategy and tactics necessary to build the revolutionary socialist party in the United States and across the globe."

At the time of calling this meeting, it was announced that "Socialist Action now has members in nineteen cities, including over fifty new members who have joined since its founding conference last October. The goal of winning 500 new subscribers to the

newspaper set at the February plenum was surpassed. The current press run of *Socialist Action* is 3000."⁵⁷

Although most of the space in the monthly newspaper was taken up by discussion of issues of U.S. foreign policy, internal economic problems in the United States, strikes and other items on the labor movement, Socialist Action also put out another kind of periodical, the mimeographed *Socialist Action Information Bulletin*, which dealt with issues in the organization's quarrel with the Socialist Workers Party. By September 1984 the organization had published six issues of that periodical.⁵⁸

Socialist Action also published some pamphlet material against the swp. One of these publications was *In Defense of Revolutionary Continuity* written by Dianne Feeley and Paul Le Blanc. It attacked the "turn to the Cubans," and argued that that turn was "linked to the marginalization of the swp as a force in the class struggle in the United States itself."⁵⁹

Like the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Socialist Action endorsed Mel Mason and Andrea González, the Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice president in the 1984 election. At the same time they ran one candidate of their own, Sylvia Weinstein, for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.⁶⁰

In June 1985 the Socialist Action group suffered its first split. A dissident group held a conference in Chicago where they established Socialist Union. According to the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* this split took place "over a number of political and organizational problems, which included (1) disagreements over the proper assessment of the Nicaraguan PSLN and Salvadorean FMLN as well as the character of the revolutionary processes in Central America; (2) how to approach the problem of regroupment with other forces on the left in the United States; and (3) what kinds of internal organizational practices were appropriate."⁶¹

*Peter Camejo and the
North Star Network*

The third dissident group which emerged from the purge in the Socialist Workers Party between 1982 and 1984 was that led by Peter (Pedro) Camejo. It was different in several ways from either the Fourth Internationalist Tendency or Socialist Action. For one thing, Peter Camejo was roughly of the same leadership generation as the majority of the dominant SWP faction. He had been the party's candidate for president in 1976. He was in addition a member of the International Executive Committee of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, and had been supported for membership in that body by the leadership of the SWP. There was another difference between the Camejo group and the other two dissident factions. Camejo did not have basic differences with the SWP leadership on ideological issues. Thus, in a pamphlet setting forth his position Camejo wrote that insofar as the SWP leadership was concerned, "Two important shifts, which reflect fundamentally positive steps, have been the decision to colonize industry and to recognize the revolutionary proletarian character of the Cuban Communist Party, the FSLN in Nicaragua, the FMLN in El Salvador and the New Jewel Movement in Grenada."⁶²

What Camejo was critical of were the tactical approaches of the Jack Barnes leadership group. He attacked their limitation of the "turn to industry" to only the unions in basic industries; their refusal to work in united front groups on particular issues such as support of the guerrillas in El Salvador, and support for the Solidarity movement in Poland, and their denunciation of the nuclear freeze movement. Camejo also attacked the SWP leadership majority's limitation of discussion within the party. Camejo wrote that "the right to a tendency was clearly a right, not something for which one applied to the leadership bodies. . . . The majority had the right to set the timing and the

manner in which discussions and conventions could take place within limits set by the constitution, which was simply the same as saying by limits set by the previous convention. This is no longer true in the SWP. The majority faction has not only declared that in order to form a tendency the majority must approve it; they have simply refused requests for the formation of tendencies."⁶³

Finally, Camejo attacked the expulsions which began in 1982. He wrote that "the real reason for the long list of rather bizarre expulsions is political. The logic of the position of the majority faction is that they believe that the politics of the minorities are incompatible with membership. This is their real position. The complication they face is that many of the political positions of the minority currents are also held by others in the Fourth International, and thus it would create an unsolvable contradiction for them to remain in the Fourth International while declaring such views incompatible with membership in the SWP."⁶⁴

While still in the SWP, the leaders of the other two dissident factions strongly opposed Camejo's expulsion. In their document, "New Norms for Old," which they submitted to the August 1983 National Committee Plenum, the four dissident members of the committee wrote:

The exclusion of Peter C. is of unique significance, because Peter was a central leader and one of the best known public spokespersons for the YSA and SWP for many years. He was refused readmittance to our party on flimsy organizational pretexts, despite the SWP leadership's recognition that Peter was a member of the Fourth International. (They voted for his inclusion on the IEC as a full member.) Such an exclusion has no precedent in our movement's history. Whatever political differences comrades may have had with Peter, and whatever Peter's subsequent political trajectory has been, the correct

approach required debating out our differences within a common organizational framework.⁶⁵

The way in which Camejo was removed from the party was unique. After a controversy between him and Jack Barnes in an swp leadership meeting, during which Camejo reportedly charged that if Barnes in fact favored the setting up of a new international, with the Cubans, Sandinistas and so on, he was not doing anything very concrete to bring about such a development, Camejo refused to run for reelection to the Political Committee. Soon afterward he went to Venezuela, whence his family came, and stayed there for about a year. When he returned to the United States and requested reinstatement as a full member of the Socialist Workers Party, the Barnes leadership refused to allow his readmission. As a member of the International Executive Committee of the USEC (without being a member of any USEC party), Camejo traveled extensively for the international leadership. He was reportedly influential in convincing the leadership of the Australian Socialist Workers Party not to continue its long association with its U.S. counterpart.⁶⁶

Although Camejo was in effect expelled from the swp, many of his supporters were apparently not. According to the Fourth Internationalist Tendency's *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, "Most of the ex-swp members in the Camejo current were not expelled from the swp; they resigned because of discouragement at the prospect of trying to change the party's course or leadership, which they consider hopeless. . . ."⁶⁷

Camejo and his supporters established what they called the North Star Network. The attitude of the swp leadership toward that group was markedly different from that toward the other two dissident movements. Thus, the November 28, 1983, issue of the swp periodical *Intercontinental Press* carried the complete contents of the first issue of *North Star Newsletter*, the Camejo

group's publication. It did so without any comment, except to note that the North Star Network had recently been established by Pedro Camejo, "who resigned from the U.S. Socialist Workers Party in 1981 and is a fraternal member of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, and Byron Ackerman, who resigned from the swp earlier this year."

The *Intercontinental Press* introduction also noted that the North Star Network had "helped initiate a broader formation called the Bay Area United Forum." It added that "the other organizations participating in the united forum are: the Bay Area Socialist Organizing Committee; the Bay Area *Guardian* bureau; Solidarity, an organization of former members of the New American Movement (NAM); and Workers Power. Workers Power sponsors a quarterly magazine called *Against the Current*, among whose editors are Steve Zeluck, Carl Boggs, Carl Feingold, Myra Tanner Weiss, and Milton Zaslow."⁶⁸ It did not mention that Zaslow had been a major leader of the Cochranites, and Myra Tanner Weiss a member of the swp Political Committee (and three times swp candidate for vice president) until resigning in the early 1960s.

Again, in February 1985 the swp's periodical *Intercontinental Press* published an article (without comment) on a conference of Camejo's North Star Network, at which it merged with a small San Francisco based group, the Bay Area Socialist Organizing Committee. It quoted one North Star resolution, that "we are only at the stage of trying through practical and theoretical work in the living movements of today to help move towards a more effective socialist movement." The article ended with the address of the North Star Network, for anyone who might wish to get in touch with it.⁶⁹

International Implications of the SWP Purge

The purge of the American swp aroused considerable interest throughout International

Trotskyism. Not only the United Secretariat's publication *Inprecor*, but also *Tribune Internationale* of the Lambertist tendency CORQI, published excerpts from the statement announcing the formation of Socialist Action.⁷⁰

It was inevitable that the United Secretariat, with which the Socialist Workers Party was associated, would become directly involved in the purge taking place within the SWP between 1982 and 1984. We have already noted the polemics of Ernest Mandel with the majority SWP leaders. Right after the August 1983 Plenum of the SWP National Committee, which "suspended" the four opposition members of the committee, two representatives of the USEC who had attended the meeting issued a statement which began "the proposed suspension of comrades Bloom, Lovell, Weinstein and Henderson from the SWP National Committee on the charge that they are acting as a 'secret faction' can only be interpreted as an act of overt political hostility to the Fourth International as a whole."⁷¹

Following their suspension the four dissident members of the National Committee issued a document entitled "Sound the Alarm," which was addressed "To All Sections, Sympathizing Groups, and Members of the Fourth International."⁷² Then, at a meeting of the United Secretariat in October 1983, "the SWP crisis was discussed at length by representatives from the major sections of the Fourth International."⁷³ That session adopted a statement entitled "The Political Purge in the American Socialist Workers Party."

The October 1983 USEC statement began, "The decision by the SWP National Committee at its August 1983 plenum to suspend (in reality: expel) the four minority NC members—comrades Bloom, Henderson, Lovell and Weinstein—from first the National Committee and then the party as such, and the new wave of expulsions of comrades with minority views initiated at the Plenum, represent a *qualitative* escala-

tion of the purge of oppositionists underway in the SWP. The de facto expulsion of the NC minority comrades is designed to prevent their participation in the international discussion in the preworld congress period and in the political life of the Socialist Workers Party. These measures are in defiance of the norms and traditions of the Fourth International, which also used to be those of the SWP."⁷⁴ The USEC statement went on to say that insofar as the four expelled National Committee members were concerned, "The United Secretariat . . . continues to regard them as members of the FI (to the extent that this is compatible with American law)." It added that "the United Secretariat recognizes that the comrades expelled from the SWP because of their political views will have no choice but to organize collectively in order to, on the one hand participate in the world congress discussion and fight for their political views, and on the other to continue carrying out their responsibilities as revolutionary class struggle militants. The International will maintain relations with these comrades."

The USEC statement also criticized the nature of the SWP's recent participation in the affairs of the United Secretariat. It said that "during this process of adoption of a range of new positions compared to traditional views of the SWP and the International, the SWP leadership's participation in the political life and discussions of the International has markedly declined. For example it has failed to propose a *single* positive written resolution on any political question in the International, in spite of the fact that it has systematically voted against the draft resolutions proposed to the IEC meetings of 1981 and 1982 and a series of United Secretariat meetings during the same period, including drafts for the world congress." The statement went on to say:

Moreover, the SWP leadership has unilaterally taken questions of internal debate in the FI to the public and launched major

attacks against leaders and sections of the International. For instance, the Mexican PRT has been treated as an opponent organization in the Central American solidarity work. And the Australian section and leadership has been attacked as being degenerate and adapting to racism and the chauvinist ideology of Australian imperialism. Simultaneously the swp leadership has started to create an organized international current which in reality is an unprincipled grouping without any platform presented to the International and its members. All these actions of the swp leaders severely endanger the unity and integrity of the Fourth International.⁷⁵

A month after the October 1983 USEC meeting another incident underscored the growing rift of the swp leadership with the United Secretariat. Ernest Mandel, one of the major figures in the USEC, head of its Belgian affiliate, and probably the best-known Marxist economist, spoke at several meetings at the University of Michigan. However, according to Alan Wald, a member of Socialist Action who organized the Mandel meetings, "the swp national office refused to relay to the Detroit branch of the swp our request that they assist in publicizing and participating in the meeting. . . ."⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the swp had launched jointly with the Canadian affiliate of the USEC a new magazine, with the suggestive name *New International*. The introduction to the first issue of the periodical explained that "its purpose is to present political, theoretical, and historical material related to the most important questions of program, strategy, and organization confronting those building communist parties in North America and around the world. . . . As indicated by its name, *New International* aims to be part of the political discussion and exchange that must accompany progress toward building an international revolutionary leadership of the working class. That has been the goal of conscious proletarian

revolutionists since 1847. The Fourth International was founded in 1938 to continue the struggle to achieve that goal."⁷⁷

The first issue of *New International* featured two "major articles." These were the speech of Jack Barnes at the YSA convention on December 31, 1982, in which he repudiated the theory of permanent revolution and dissociated the swp from most groups calling themselves Trotskyists; and an article entitled "Lenin and the Colonial Question" by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, the principal figure from the old Stalinist pre-Castro Cuban Communist Party still active in the leadership of the Castro regime.

Relations between the swp leadership and the United Secretariat continued to decline during 1984. This was reflected at the party's thirty-second national convention, which met after a year's delay in August 1984. A report by Bill Onasch of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency on that convention noted that "There *were* international guests at the thirty-second convention—but only those who were granted political visas by the swp leadership on the basis of loyalty to the Barnes faction. (The Canadian and New Zealand sections have marched lock-step with Barnes along the road to revisionism. The Barnes faction also has lined up a substantial minority in Britain and has scattered groupings of followers in a few European and Latin American countries, and a tiny group of supporters that were expelled from the Australian swp). The official leadership of the FI and all those considered supporters of the 'international majority' . . . were excluded from attending the 32nd convention and the concurrent Education and Activists Conferences."⁷⁸

Meanwhile, the dissident groups which had been expelled from the swp participated actively in the discussions preparatory to the 1985 congress of the United Secretariat. Various issues of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency's *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* during 1984 carried discussion articles on questions to be debated at the Congress.

The swp also was preparing for the USEC

World Congress. At its 1984 convention the swp leadership provided for holding a special convention to elect congress delegates and to adopt resolutions to be submitted to the international meeting.⁷⁹ When the congress finally met in February 1985, one of its principal organizational concerns was the situation of the groups associated with it in the United States. It adopted several resolutions on the subject. The first of these stated that "the World Congress upholds the request of the expelled swp members who have regrouped in Socialist Action (sa) and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT) to appeal their expulsion collectively . . . the World Congress supports the sa and FIT request that all their members be collectively integrated into the swp, with all the rights and duties stemming from the organizational norms of democratic centralism." Another resolution stated that "the World Congress upholds the collective appeal of the expelled swp members now regrouped in sa and FIT . . . the World Congress demands the *collective reintegration* of all the present members of sa and FIT who were expelled from the swp into swp membership." Still another resolution provided that "the World Congress rules that, as long as sa and FIT are not collectively reintegrated into the swp, the entire organized membership of sa and FIT will be considered as full members of the Fourth International, with all the rights and duties prescribed by its statutes, and within the limitations imposed by reactionary U.S. legislation."⁸⁰

A year after the usec congress, the swp had failed completely to comply with the demand of the usec congress. Indeed, in the original agenda announced for its August 1985 convention the swp leadership had not even included discussion of the matter. Only after a June meeting of the United Secretariat adopted a motion "specifically asking the swp convention to consider this issue" was an item added to the agenda.

However, "considering" the usec's demands did not mean conforming to them. Stuart Brown, of the FIT subsequently re-

ported that "the report and motions that were adopted by the convention specifically rejected carrying out the decision of the world congress on the appeals of the expelled members. The delegates also voted to continue the policy of excluding all members of the groups organized by the expelled—the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Socialist Action, and Socialist Unity—from any public meetings or premises of the swp."⁸¹

A meeting of the United Secretariat in October 1985 reacted strongly to the decisions of the August convention of the swp. It passed a resolution which restated the decisions of the usec World Congress with regard to the swp, noting that those decisions had had the support of "almost ninety percent" of the delegates. It proclaimed that the swp convention's decisions "violate the overwhelming majority demands of the World Congress. . . ." Then, after noting the continuing fiction that because of "reactionary U.S. legislation," the swp was only a "fraternal section" not a full-fledged part of usec, the resolution said that "the decisions of the swp convention, if adopted by a section, would be a complete negation of even the simply moral and political authority of the sovereign body of the International, its World Congress. In so doing a section would be refusing to abide by the spirit of our statutes, and thus put itself outside the common framework of our norms."

The usec resolution then noted that because of the swp's actions, "there are now in the United States four totally separate organizations of fraternal members with the same rights and duties: the Socialist Workers Party, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Socialist Action and Socialist Unity. . . ." It added that "the United Secretariat defends the right of each of these organizations to attempt to build the revolutionary party in the United States but does not support the orientation of any one group against the others. . . ."⁸²

While the usec thus used the supposed "fraternal" nature of swp affiliation with it

as an excuse for not expelling the swp from its ranks, the swp leadership itself apparently decided that, in spite of its hopes for a new international grouping with the Cuban Communist Party, the Sandinistas and others, and its own quarrels with the usec leadership, for the time being at least it would stay within the United Secretariat.

This decision was particularly evident in its attitude toward the abandonment of the usec by the Australian Socialist Workers Party. The relations between the two swps had for many years been peculiarly close. In the early 1980s, the leadership of both parties had rejected Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, and had grown increasingly unhappy with the designation as "Trotskyists." However, for reasons that are explored in our discussion of Australian Trotskyism they did not become allies within the usec, nor did the U.S. swp follow its Australian counterpart in abandoning the usec. Articles in the September 23, 1985, issue of *Intercontinental Press* criticized at considerable length the position of the Australian swp. One of these, by Larry Seigle, summed up the differences with regard to the usec as follows: "We now face the danger that the political March-outs of the leadership of the Australian swp is going to March the party right out of the Fourth International. That will mean losing valuable cadres, and will be a blow to the Fourth International. The challenge to the leadership of the International as a whole is to advance the political clarification of the differences with the leadership of the Australian swp, to minimize the losses and maximize the chances of keeping the Australian section in the Fourth International."⁸³

Conclusion

Starting in 1981, the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party began a fundamental break with the traditional ideas of International Trotskyism. It repudiated the theory of permanent revolution, virtually dropped the insistence on the need for "political rev-

olutions" in the countries controlled by the heirs of Stalin, and concluded that Lenin had been right and Trotsky had been wrong in the controversies of the pre-1917 period.

The swp leadership also put forward the idea of the need to establish a "new Communist International" in which the Cuban Communist Party, the Sandinistas, the New Jewel Movement, and presumably the swp itself, would be key elements. It did not officially break with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International—indeed it sent twenty-eight "fraternal delegates and observers" to the February 1985 World Congress of the usec.⁸⁴ However, six months after the United Secretariat ordered the reinstatement of those whom it had expelled for opposition to the new orientation of the swp, the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party specifically refused to follow the bidding of the World Congress of the usec.

The split in the Socialist Workers Party in the early 1980s was of major significance for International Trotskyism. The swp was one of the oldest Trotskyist organizations, and for more than half a century had been one of the largest segments of International Trotskyism. It had had a particularly close relationship with Trotsky. Its total break with the movement, which seemed to be presaged by the purge of the early 1980s would constitute a split in the ranks of International Trotskyism which would be significant not only in quantitative terms, but of profound importance in terms of abandonment by one of the movement's most important constituents of allegiance to the ideas and organization which had been elaborated by Trotsky.

U.S. Trotskyism: The Shachtmanite Tradition After Shachtman

By the time the majority of the members of the Independent Socialist League (ISL) joined the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation in the latter months of 1958, most of them (including Max Shachtman himself) were no longer Trotskyists. They had become Democratic Socialists or Social Democrats. Nevertheless, the ideas which had been developed in connection with the Shachtmanite split in the Socialist Workers Party by no means ceased being an ideological strain within American Trotskyism. The conviction that the Soviet Union (and the other countries which had come under Communist Party-Stalinist control subsequent to World War II) were not in any sense "workers' states" continued to be held by many who still considered themselves Trotskyists.

Within a few years after the disappearance of the Independent Socialist League, this ideological trend in American Trotskyism had again found organizational form. Indeed, a loose-knit "International Socialist" tendency with the non-workers' state orientation had developed, as we note in another chapter.

However, within this tendency of American (and international) Trotskyism there developed sharp differences of opinion, definition and interpretation. Some elements held to the "bureaucratic collectivism" theory which had been developed by Shachtman and others, but there were also those who adopted one version or another of the view that the Communist Party-controlled regimes were "state capitalist" in nature.

The International Socialists

The Emergence of the IS

Among those ISL leaders and members who opposed entry into the Socialist Party-Social

Democratic Federation there were a number who submitted to the decision of the majority and joined the SP-SDF in spite of their dislike of the idea. At least some of these people continued to regard themselves as Trotskyists. Within the SP-SDF they recruited a few people to their point of view, particularly from among the youth, who had never been Trotskyists of any description before.

One of the leading figures in the ISL who had been against entry into the SP-SDF was Hal Draper, the long-time leader of the left wing of the Independent Socialist League. It was around him that the revival of what can broadly be called "Shachtmanism" developed.

Draper has described the origins of the new Trotskyist Tendency. He has written that "it began—in 1964—as a political continuation, or recreation, of the Independent Socialist tendency which had been represented by the Independent Socialist League. In 1964 I took the initiative in forming the first Independent Socialist Club in Berkeley; within the course of the following year, a second ISC was formed in Berkeley (one on campus, one in the city) and an ISC in New York. After ISC's had been formed in several cities, a national conference was held in New York, where they federated to form what was then called the Independent Socialist Clubs of America (ISCA). That conference was in 1966."

Draper also commented on the sources of recruits for the new group: "By the end of 1964, after the Berkeley campus Independent Socialist Club had developed very quickly . . . most of its members knew no more of the SP than did anybody else; but the politics which they studied was that represented by the literature of the Independent Socialist League before the collapse of the Shachtman leadership. This was even more true outside of Berkeley, where ISC's developed." He concluded that by 1970 there were "only a handful of active members who had once been in the Independent Socialist League youth group . . . and less than a hand-

ful of older members . . . who had been members of the ISL."¹

Joel Geier, the long-time chairman and national secretary of the International Socialists, has indicated the nature of the activities of the group before its rechristening as International Socialists in 1969:

Our group was originally active in the civil rights movement (particularly CORE), the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley, white collar unions, and the anti-war and general New Left Movements. Our group was quite small, outside of Berkeley, until 1967 when we established the ISCA, as a loose confederation of local clubs. At the same time our Berkeley group played a large role in initiating the Peace and Freedom Party. We have for a long time been leading proponents of the idea of independent political action for movements of social changes leading eventually, or hoping to crystallize, the development of a Workers Party in this country.

Geier has also commented on the areas of recruitment of the IS in the 1960s. "Our growth was primarily due to our activity in the Peace and Freedom Party, and later when the SDS split and dissolved, we succeeded in winning to our ranks the former Revolutionary Socialist Caucus of the SDS, and significant parts of some SDS chapters (particularly: Univ. of Chicago, Ann Arbor, Seattle, Madison, CCNY, etc.) and some of its leading anti-Stalinist activists. The decision of those SDSers, and of some members of the Revolutionary Workers Committee of Detroit, to join the ISCA, led to our forming a national organization . . ."²

At a convention in September 1969 the Independent Socialist Clubs became International Socialists (IS). About that time Draper withdrew from the group, using as his reason what he interpreted as "dual union" trends within the organization, that is, the tendency to center its labor activities on the organization of new unions compet-

ing with existing ones. At least some of his colleagues felt that this was Draper's excuse rather than his reason for withdrawing from political activity.³ As late as 1973 he was associated with an Independent Socialist Committee, for which he wrote a "position paper" attacking the sectarian tendencies of most American radical groups.⁴

The International Socialists held to the old ideological position of the Workers Party-ISL. In "Is Program in Brief," carried regularly in their periodical, it was stated that "we believe that no existing regime can be called socialist. On a world scale, the 'socialist' countries constitute a system . . . with a common ideology and social origin. In place of capitalism this system has achieved, and now aims at, not the abolition of class society but a new type of class system."

This document went on to say that where Communist parties have taken power "these movements have placed in power, not the working class, but a self-perpetuating bureaucratic class . . . This system is no less class-ridden, and in its fully developed form (as in the USSR) no less imperialist than capitalism."⁵

During the evolution of the autonomous Independent Socialist Clubs into International Socialists there were several issues of controversy within the group. One of these was their position on the Vietnam War. They were opposed to United States involvement in the war, from the beginning, but were hesitant about supporting victory for the Vietnamese Communists.

A typical earlier statement by the Independent Socialists appeared in their publication in its January-February 1967 issue: "As Americans we particularly oppose the presence of U.S. troops in other lands and call for their immediate withdrawal so that nations like Vietnam may determine their own destiny. We look to independent democratic movements of workers and peasants as the alternative to the future Communist rulers as leaders of the anti-colonial struggle."⁶

However, the founding convention of the

International Socialists in September 1969 adopted a resolution which said, in part: "the building of an independent, democratic alternative in Vietnam would have been immeasurably easier if the imperialists had been driven out in 1945, 1954, 1963 or 1966. But American Imperialism must be driven out in any case. At the present that means it will be driven out by the Vietnamese under the leadership of the NLF. Our support for the military victory of the Vietnamese in that conflict in no way contradicts our political support for the fight of the Vietnamese working class and peasants against their new rulers."⁷

Trajectory of the International Socialists

With the establishment of the International Socialists there were organizational and policy changes within the organization. The national office of the International Socialist Clubs had been in New York, and its periodical, *I.S.*, had been published in Berkeley. The headquarters of both were transferred to the Detroit area, and the name of the group's periodical was changed from *I.S.* to *Workers Power*.⁸

After the establishment of International Socialists there was a change in the general orientation of the group. Joel Geier, the national secretary of IS, observed in 1970 that "in the past, we have been active mainly in the student, anti-war and women's movements. Our emphasis in the next year will be on increasing activity in the working class. We argue for rank and file struggle organizations which can fight when and where the unions refuse to fight; caucuses of black and women workers; political action by workers organizations, independent of the Democratic and Republican parties."⁹ Subsequently, the International Socialists succeeded in organizing rank-and-file groups in a number of U.S. unions. Their orientation in this work was severely criticized by other Trotskyist groups, notably

the Spartacists, as being too limited in its objectives. The IS made its own presentation of its trade union policy in a resolution on "Labor Perspectives" adopted at its 1972 convention: "We proceed from the class struggle as it really is today, and not as we wish it. We propose directions for the growing rank and file movement without making sectarian demands on that movement. Rank and file groups usually arise around a specific event, incident, or issue. It is the task of socialists and advanced militants to move the group in a broader programmatic direction. This is not done by putting forth a score of demands all at once. New demands and concepts should be introduced in a logical and relevant manner."¹⁰

The International Socialists would seem to be the Trotskyist group which was most successful in establishing some base in the organized labor movement in the 1970s. Like several of the others, it "colonized" its members in the trade unions, but unlike most of them it succeeded in attaining some degree of influence in rank-and-file movements in a number of unions.

One of the earliest opposition groups in which the IS members had some influence was the United Action Caucus in Local 1101 of the Communications Workers of America. The IS was also active in the West Coast International Longshoremen's Union, where an IS leader, Stan Weir, lodged a court suit against the union leadership when it sought to expel him. They were involved in the fight against the long-established leadership of the National Maritime Union and against the Boyle regime in the United Mine Workers, supporting the ultimately successful campaign of Arnold Miller.¹¹

From time to time the International Socialists organized regional conferences of rebel trade unionists. One in Oakland in January 1975 on "Building the Rank and File Movement" was attended by workers from the longshoremen, teamsters, and various other organizations.¹²

The union in which the International So-

cialists had most success was the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In the early 1970s they worked within the Teamsters Rank and File Caucus, which was organized around the issue of the misspending of the Teamsters' pension fund moneys by union leaders.¹³ Later in the decade the is played an important role in another rebel group, the Teamsters for a Decent Contract.¹⁴ In the process of this struggle they were able to recruit at least a few important rank-and-file teamsters' leaders—some if not all of whom subsequently abandoned the International Socialists in one of its several splits.

By the late 1970s the International Socialists were publishing a special periodical, *Labor Notes*, identified as the organ of the "Labor Education and Research Project." This periodical carried news on the rank-and-file movements in a variety of different unions.

The "Project" also organized periodic "Labor Notes Conferences." That of April 1981 featured panels on "The Attack on Labor and Organizing the Fight Back," "New Areas of Organizing," and "The Future of the Rank and File Movement," as well as nineteen "workshops" on such things as "Local Union Elections," "Caucus Organizing" "Reformers in Power." The speakers included people from twelve international unions, as well as such figures as the author Sidney Lens, labor journalist Steve Early, and Herbert Hill, professor and former labor director of the NAACP.¹⁵

Until 1977 the U.S. International Socialists formed part of the loose-knit International Socialist Tendency. They were represented at a conference of that group in 1970.¹⁶ In 1975 they organized a successful tour around the United States for Neil Davies, a member of the National Committee of the British International Socialists, in connection with their fund-raising campaign to convert their newspaper *Workers Power* into a weekly.¹⁷ However, as a consequence of a split in the is in 1977 it ceased to be the U.S. affiliate of the international group.

The general orientation of the International Socialists was indicated in the statement "is Where We Stand," which appeared regularly in their periodical. Although its text changed from time to time in the light of passing events, its main emphases were consistent. Late in 1976 this statement listed the following under "We Oppose," "Capitalist Exploitation . . . Capitalist Control . . . Oppression . . . Capitalist Government," and "Bureaucratic Communism." Under the last heading the statement said that "Russia, China and the countries with economies like theirs are also oppressive class societies, run by a privileged ruling class of bureaucrats. They are not socialist and must be overthrown by the working classes of those countries."

Under the heading, "We Support," the statement listed "The Rank and File Movement, Liberation from Oppression: We support the struggles of every oppressed group to end its oppression: the struggle for equality and justice by blacks, women, gays, latinos, native Americans and all oppressed people. Support from the entire working class movement will make both these struggles, and that movement stronger." The statement listed "Socialism" as among those things supported by is, saying that "Society should be run by the working class. The wealth produced by those who work should go to fill people's needs, not to private gains." It also expressed support for "Workers Revolution" and "Internationalism." It reflected its Leninist-Trotskyist "vanguard party" origins in its support of a "Revolutionary Party," with the explanation that "the most class conscious members of the working class have the responsibility to lead the struggle toward socialist revolution. To do this they must build an organization to put their consciousness into action and make their leadership effective." The statement ended with the claim that "the is is an organization of revolutionary socialist workers. We are open to all who accept our basic principles and are willing to work as a member to achieve them. Join

with us to build the IS into a revolutionary party, to build the movement to end exploitation and oppression and to create a socialist world."¹⁸

The Revolutionary Socialist League

The International Socialists suffered several splits during the 1970s. The first of these took place in 1973, when about one-third of the estimated 300 members of IS broke away to form the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL).¹⁹ Two principal issues appear to have been behind the criticisms of the IS leadership by the dissident Revolutionary Tendency of IS which was to form the RSL. One was the desire for a more explicit adherence to Trotskyism than that which the International Socialists had evidenced. The second more or less followed from the first: opposition to the down-playing of their revolutionary objectives in the day-to-day work of the IS people in the unions.

The International Socialists had certainly never foresworn Trotskyism. In a book list they circulated in 1970 there were included eight books by Trotsky, as well as Max Shachtman's *The Bureaucratic Revolution*.²⁰ However, although the International Socialists did not formally abandon Trotskyism, neither did they put major emphasis on it. Their periodical had relatively little reference to the question, and Trotsky was not mentioned in the regularly appearing "IS Where We Stand" which appeared in each issue, although some of his basic ideas were expounded there.

The Revolutionary Tendency went back to emphasis on Trotsky's ideas, particularly the Transitional Program. One of the principal documents emerging from this internal conflict was Ron Tabor's "On the Transitional Program." In that paper Tabor claimed the Transitional Program as "the key to the agitation and propaganda of the revolutionary organization," and that it "functions at all levels of struggle, from the education and training of the revolutionary cadres, to the mobilization of the broadest

masses by the vanguard. Seen this way," Tabor concluded, "the Transitional Program is not a manipulative tool to be whipped out on the eve of the revolution to mobilize the masses, as Comrade Geier argues, but the chief means by which the working class becomes conscious of itself, of its needs and interests, and struggles for its rule."

This same document indicated the dissidents' disagreements with the IS trade union policy. Tabor wrote that "in our agitational work, our job is to initiate and intervene in the workers' struggles around trade union, partial and democratic demands, seeking to relate these to class-wide demands, to fight within the labor movement for a fighting policy addressing the needs of the class as a whole . . . and more generally to raise the demands and slogans of the Transitional Program, even when these may be unpopular. . . ."²¹

At the outbreak of this factional fight the critics seemed to have had the upper hand. In 1972 Sy Landy was chosen national secretary of the organization in place of Joel Geier. However, the group around Landy tended to be unstable, and within a year he was not only removed as leader of the IS but his faction was expelled from the organization.²²

The Revolutionary Socialist League soon developed ideological differences with the organization from which it had emerged. Rick Miles of the RSL has written that "when we were formed as an independent organization, our politics could be described as a kind of orthodox Trotskyism with the important exception of our analysis of the nature of the Stalinist countries. We agreed with Trotsky's emphasis on building an international revolutionary party, his theory of the Permanent Revolution, his opposition to the Popular Fronts of the 1930s, his analysis of the Chinese and Spanish Revolutions, the overall approach of the Transitional Program, etc."²³

The Revolutionary Socialist League also differed from the International Socialists'

position on "the Russian question." They no longer believed in the "bureaucratic collectivism" analysis of the U.S. International Socialists, although continuing to reject the idea that the Soviet Union and other Communist Party-controlled regimes were "workers' states." Rather, they came to the conclusion that those were "state capitalist."

Ron Tabor stated the RSL position in an article "State Capitalism vs. Workers Rule," which was published in the RSL paper *The Torch*. He wrote that "By state capitalism, we mean the social system that exists in the countries called 'Communist': Russia, China, Outer Mongolia, Cuba, and the countries of Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, and North Korea. These societies, *despite what they are called and what their own rulers call them*, are capitalist. All represent a form of capitalism in which major property is in the hands of the state and the state itself runs production on a capitalist basis."²⁴

Tabor elaborated upon the RSL state capitalist definition. Under state capitalism, he said:

... the working class continues to sell its labor power on the market for a wage sufficient only to maintain it at subsistence [the fact that it is a monopolized market does not alter this fundamental capital-labor relationship] the difference between what is paid and what is produced (surplus value) is appropriated by an alien class; and moreover, this alien class reinvests its surplus in such a way as to increase its power over and against the workers, i.e., it invests the surplus value predominantly in production of the means of production in order to further increase the surplus value gained from the production process. ... In other words: (1) the wage laborers are exploited by an alien class, which buys labor power as a commodity, at value (2) production is for profit [the collective profit of the state-capitalist trusts]; and (3) the funda-

mental dynamic of the system is production for the sake of accumulation. These are the basic laws of motion and relationship of classes that define capitalism."²⁵

The Revolutionary Socialist League also differed from the International Socialists on its insistence on the need to rebuild the Fourth International. About a year after the formation of the RSL, writing in connection with negotiations for possible unity with the Class Struggle League (which at the time was advocating a Fifth International), Sy Landy emphasized this point on behalf of the Political Committee of the RSL: "The Pabloists and other assorted betrayers who presently parade as *the* Fourth Internationalists do not dispose of the same resources as did the Stalinist betrayers of the Third. ... They do not have the resource of state power anywhere in the world. The total domination of the Stalinists over the Third International forced Trotsky to abandon the number and the organization in order to preserve the program. Such is not the case for Trotskyists today. To preserve the program is to preserve the number and our right to it. ..."²⁶

In spite of its expressed desire to reestablish a "genuine" Fourth International, the RSL did not become part of any of the larger currents of International Trotskyism. Its only foreign counterpart has been the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica. Rick Miles has explained that "at the moment, we consider ourselves to be a companion organization of the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica, which puts out a newspaper *Forward*, and is very active in working-class struggles in Jamaica. The RML is the only left organization in Jamaica that is opposing both the JLP and the PNP in the upcoming elections in that country. Although the organizations are not formally 'fused' we both consider ourselves to be part of one international tendency."²⁷

The ideas of the RSL continued to evolve. By 1985 a statement on "What We Stand

For," noted that "the RSL identifies itself in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, particularly the pioneering theoretical work of Marx and Engels, the conception of the party, the stress on the importance of national liberation struggles and the antistatism shown in *The State and Revolution* of Lenin; and the fight against Stalinism of Trotsky. But we also identify with the best of anarchism, particularly its libertarian spirit. . . . Revolutionaries must be the vanguard in the fight for common decency and true freedom. . . ."28

The RSL was active in several different fields. One was the trade union movement. Although the Revolutionary Socialist League was unable to develop units in as many unions as the International Socialists, Rick Miles has noted that since 1975 "we have been active in the unions, particularly the UAW and USW. We have recently been involved in an organizing drive among Latin workers in a not-so-friendly relationship with the ILGWU in Los Angeles."²⁹ At the 1976 convention of the UAW, the RSL-organized Revolutionary Action Caucus held demonstrations against the union administration then led by Leonard Woodcock.³⁰

Miles has noted other fields of activity and propaganda of the RSL: "We were very active in the movement to support the liberation struggle of blacks, people of mixed race and Asians in South Africa in the period after the Soweto uprising. We were involved in various kinds of prisoner-support work; our newspaper *The Torch/La Antorcha* has a substantial readership among prisoners." Miles went on, "In the past couple of years, we have been very active in the struggle against various Nazi and Klan organizations. . . . We believe the Nazis and particularly the various Klan groups have actual and potential mass bases that are much larger than most people believe. This is to a great degree based on our view that world capitalism is now entering into a severe crisis on the order of the Depression of the 1930s."

Finally, Miles noted that "one particularly important area of our work has been in the gay liberation movement because (1) Much of the left suffers from the same homophobia that characterizes society as a whole. . . . (2) We believe the question of gay liberation gives us important openings to raise our views on the nature of socialism, that is, that it is a free society directly run by working class and oppressed people, not an authoritarian system run by a state capitalist class, and to convince people of our analysis of the Stalinist countries, in which gays are very oppressed."³¹

In 1977 a minority faction of the Red Flag Union, a "gay revolutionaries" group who had come to agree with the RSL's "state capitalist" position with regard to the Communist-controlled regimes, joined the Revolutionary Socialist League. The majority of the Union joined the Spartacist League, and the organization ceased to exist as such.³²

Beginning in the late 1970s the RSL sought to join with other groups which it considered to be "revolutionary" to counteract the influence in organized labor and other fields of the "reformist groups." Ron Taber outlined this policy in an article in *The Torch* entitled "Reform or Revolution? Key Question for the Left."

After first observing that superficially the "U.S. left" seemed to be divided mainly between Trotskyists and Stalinists, he said that in reality there were great differences among the groups within those two alignments. There were reformists in both camps. Furthermore, "a number of groups—both 'Trotskyist' and 'Stalinist'—seem to share agreement on the need for violent revolution to overthrow capitalism; consider all, or almost all, the so-called 'socialist' countries some form of capitalism; and generally pursue more militant policies. In our view, these more left-wing tendencies include the PLP, the RCP, the Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee, and ourselves, among others. This should suggest that the current lines of division on the left are, at

bottom, artificial and false. To us, the most basic and most important issue facing the working class today is the question—reform or revolution?"

Deriving from this analysis, Tabor presented his group's tactical line: "There can be no doubt that the differences among the tendencies are of vital importance to the workers' movement and cannot be ignored or glossed over. The revolutionary party can only be built through a determined political struggle over these questions. But we should not let the political struggle among the anti-reformist forces hinder the fight against the reformists any more than is necessary. While carefully pursuing the political debate among ourselves, the anti-reformist organizations should find ways to join forces in specific united fronts around concrete struggle against the reformists."³³ There is no indication that the *rsl* was successful in organizing any such united fronts.

Rick Miles has summed up the long-range perspective of the *rsl*, saying, "Our fundamental strategic goal is to build an international revolutionary party based on the Bolshevik model, i.e. before the Bolshevik Party was taken over by Stalin. Hence our organization functions on the basis of democratic centralism which, despite the contentions of both the Stalinists and the bourgeois critics of Lenin, is not bureaucratic."³⁴

Splits in the *rsl*

The Trotskyist Organization of the U.S.

The Revolutionary Socialist League suffered several splits. The first of these divisions took place early in 1974 and resulted in the establishment of the Trotskyist Organization of the U.S. (*rous*).

Ian Daniels of the *rsl* has noted that "the 'Soviet Defensist Minority' split out of the *rsl* to form the 'Trotskyist Organization/USA,' which publishes *Truth*, and is affiliated to the Varga wing of the *fi*. *rous* started

as the Communist Faction of the *swp*, split, entered the *is*, then left *rsl* as above. It retains a degenerated workers state analysis."³⁵

In 1975 *rous* absorbed the majority of the Class Struggle League, principally these people who in 1972, as the Leninist Faction, had split from the Socialist Workers Party, and then joined forces with a dissident Spartacist group, led by Harry Turner. In May 1975 the Class Struggle League once more split into its constituent parts—ex-Leninist League and Turner group. Mike Conrad of *rous* has written that "The essential cause of the split in the *csl* revolved around the fact that the comrades supporting the leadership recognized the necessity for a re-evaluation of the question of the struggle to rebuild the world party of socialist revolution—the *fi*. Thus it became necessary for these comrades to actively participate in this struggle to rebuild the *fi*. The only place this could be done was within the ranks of the International League."³⁶

Shortly after liquidating into *rous*, the former Leninist Faction members issued "A Call to the Militants of the Socialist Workers Party," urging them to join the fight to "rebuild" the Fourth International. This call argued that "those militants of the *swp* who see that the primary task of the socialist revolution is to construct the vanguard party on an international scale, an organized center against the bourgeoisie, Stalinism, and the liquidationist centrists, must assess and make a break with the revisionism and federalism that is the *swp/usc*. As militants of the Class Struggle League who struggled within the *swp* and have subsequently joined the Trotskyist Organization of the U.S., American supporters of the International League—Rebuilder of the Fourth International, we call upon you to begin the struggle to build a faction within the *swp* to fight for the Fourth Open Conference of the International League—a conference at which the Fourth International will be rebuilt. . . ."³⁷

The rous remained one of the smaller groups in the United States claiming allegiance to Trotskyism. They seemed to concentrate most of their efforts on bringing out and distributing their newspaper *Truth* and magazine *Fourth International*. They have been affiliated with the international faction, headed by the Hungarian Trotskyist, Balasz/Varga, which broke away from the Lambertists.

The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus

Early in 1975 the rsl suffered its second split. Rick Niles has noted that "in late 1974, a grouping formed inside the rsl that proposed that we retreat from virtually all practical, organizing activity and instead study and write books. Although this was the main issue in the dispute, there were others of a more theoretical nature, including the nature of capitalism in the 20th century and the nature of the post-war prosperity period."

This group, the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus (RMC), left the rsl without being expelled and maintained a separate existence for about two years. They then joined the Socialist Workers Party. Miles has noted that "although the RMC had defended the point of view that the Stalinist countries are state capitalist—in fact, their proposal to study and write was motivated primarily as the best means to fight for that view—the leadership and some, but not all of the RMC rank and file adopted the swp's position on the nature of these countries."³⁸ The principal leaders of the RMC were Bruce Levine (Landau), Eric Olson, and Aníbal Yáñez, son of a Mexican Trotskyist leader. The only one of these to stay in the swp was Yáñez, who in the early 1980s was still writing about Latin American issues for *The Militant*.³⁹

The League for the Revolutionary Party

The third split-off from the Revolutionary Socialist League was the League for the Rev-

olutionary Party (LRP), established late in 1975. This division was the most important one, in terms of who participated in it. The major figure was Sy Landy, who had been one of the principal leaders of the International Socialist and a major founder of the rsl.

The origin of this split, as seen from the point of view of those who stayed with the Revolutionary Socialist League, was explained by Rick Miles:

In this split, a group led by Sy Landy . . . was expelled for violation of discipline, actually systematic obstruction of the work of the organization. The political issues involved two. One was the question of the labor party. The rsl had accepted Trotsky's notion of supporting the call for a labor party, an independent party based on the trade unions, in the United States. In 1975 Landy proposed to discard this position and replace it with a call for a general strike, in fact an international general strike. Most of the rsl considered this proposal to be playing with words and rejected it.

In addition to this dispute, there was another, more fundamental issue that was actually the cause of the split. This was a proposal of the rsl majority to break from what we saw as a one-sided and abstract propagandistic approach and to get involved in various movements and struggles using a flexible united-front approach. In other words, we proposed to get involved in struggles in which people were fighting for very basic things, what we called trade union and democratic demands, and to try to fight for our revolutionary views in the course of these struggles. The Landy group rejected this and accused the rsl majority of abandoning Trotskyism.⁴⁰

Sy Landy was expelled from the rsl on November 29, 1975. His associate Walter Dahl was expelled shortly afterward.⁴¹ Most of their followers in the Revolutionary Party

Tendency stayed in the RSL a short while longer, but were expelled from the RSL on February 15, 1976. The group then joined forces to establish the League for the Revolutionary Party.⁴²

The LRP people presented their version of their differences with the RSL in an article "The Struggle for the Revolutionary Party," which appeared in the first number of their periodical, *Socialist Voice*. They proclaimed that "the RSL is on the road to centrism. . . ."⁴³

In explaining their differences with the RSL on the labor party issue, the LRP claimed that "the RSL majority put forward an openly stagist view and accepted the limitation of the class struggle to bourgeois consciousness for the next period. Accordingly, the majority made its central political slogan the demand for a labor party in the U.S. . . . Whereas Trotsky hoped that the labor party slogan would intensify the struggle between the classes, the RSL's purpose is to accept a reduced level of struggle. Whereas Trotsky argued that it would be absurd and reactionary to advocate a reformist labor party, the RSL's labor party is designed for a democratic and trade unionist stage which condemns it to a reformist program."⁴⁴

In discussing the general strike issue in the conflict the LRP organ wrote: "Thus the RSL opposed the general strike, accepting the backward workers' mistaken understanding of objective reality as instilled by the labor bureaucrats. The Bolshevik understanding is that the world situation is objectively mature for revolution, and it is the workers' backward consciousness—their conservatism, fear and sense of impotence—that must be changed. The mass of workers have a mixed consciousness; anger and explosiveness run as a steady current just below the surface. . . . To those who tail backward consciousness the workers' response will come like a thunderclap out of the blue—as in France in 1968."⁴⁵

The League for the Revolutionary Party remained relatively small. Its principal sig-

nificance was perhaps the particular interpretation which it came to give to the "state capitalist" definition of the Communist Party-controlled regimes. At its first national convention, in October 1982, the LRP adopted a resolution defining its position on this issue. According to the official report on the convention, "In order to stress the uniqueness of the LRP's theory on the Russian question, the convention resolution adopted the name 'stafified capitalism' for the Stalinist system." According to this same source, the LRP proclaimed that Stalinism "is a weak, patchwork operation clinging to Western technology and loans for survival—not a planned and powerful alternative in real contention for world domination. Its military might makes its economic fragility even clearer. Its bloc has shattered not simply for surface ideological differences but because of economic necessity. Like the neo-colonial nations, East Europe has achieved the minimal progress at the expense of huge debts to Western banks and a dependency on the world capitalist market. Russia is unable to guarantee or even partly satisfy its satellites' economic needs."

The statement went on to note that "these bastardized capitalist economies have been unable to uproot all the proletarian achievements made through revolution. They have been forced to try to turn those gains against the workers, and so they adapt the nationalized industry, foreign trade monopoly and planning structure into instruments for exploitation. But these weapons also work against the efficient operation of stafified capitalism. . . . Thus, unlike in the 1930s . . . today Russia and its semi-empire are subject to the same economic crisis as world capitalism as a whole."⁴⁶

The LRP document also stressed other aspects of the supposed similarity of the Soviet system to the Western capitalist ones. The statement argued that it was not in fact a highly centralized system with a unified ruling group, but rather was quite decentral-

ized, with different elements in the system having fiefs which they control and battle for. In conformity with this, the return which members of the bureaucracy receive from the system, it was argued, depends upon the way in which that particular part of the economy functions, again following the capitalist pattern. Finally, the LRP argued that the workers continue to be subject to the wage system, and the laws of capitalist accumulation as analyzed by Marx continue to apply in the Stalinist regimes as in any capitalist system.⁴⁷ The LRP developed no affiliation with any international Trotskyist group. At their October 1982 convention they changed their principal slogan from "Reconstruct the Fourth International," to "Re-create the Fourth International," explaining that this was "to avoid any implication of glueing together the present false claimants to Trotskyism."⁴⁸

With the spring 1984 issue of their periodical the RWI changed the name of the paper from *Socialist Voice* to *Proletarian Revolution*. Their explanation for this change was that "the need for a new name was given immediacy by the fact that, although our program has not changed, the left as a whole has shifted markedly to the right over the past decade. . . . The content of both 'socialist' and 'communist' has therefore become linked with even more compromising and mealy-mouthed dogmas than in the past. To sharply distinguish our goals and methods, we chose the name *Proletarian Revolution*. Above all, it re-emphasizes the centrality of the working class and the impossibility of serious reform in this epoch of capitalist decay. . . ."⁴⁹

More Splits in the IS

The International Socialist Organization

After the split in the International Socialists, which resulted in the formation of the Revolutionary Socialist League, the IS suf-

fered two further divisions. One of these took place late in 1977 and seems to have resulted from differences of opinion of the IS leadership with its counterpart organization in Great Britain. The result was the formation of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) which became the U.S. affiliate of the International Socialist Tendency on a world scale.⁵⁰

Although associated with one of the branches of the international Trotskyist movement, the ISO and its monthly newspaper gave relatively little evidence of such affiliation. An issue of *Socialist Worker*, the ISO organ in early 1983 contained no reference to Trotsky or Trotskyism. Although the regular feature "Where We Stand," in which the organization outlines its ideology and stand on various issues, contained a section on "Internationalism," that section contained no reference to the ISO's international affiliation or to the Fourth International in general.

The other parts of this statement of the ISO's position included one on workers' control which argued that "a socialist society can only be built when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and democratically plan its production and distribution according to human needs instead of profit. . . ." Another called for "Revolution not Reform," and a fourth section called for "A Workers' Government," indicating closer association with traditional Trotskyism, stating that "the present state apparatus . . . cannot be taken over as it stands and converted to serve workers. The working class needs an entirely different kind of state based upon mass democratic councils of workers delegates."

The dissident Trotskyist origin of the ISO was most closely reflected in the comment in "Where We Stand" that "Russia, China, Cuba and Eastern Europe are not socialist countries. They are state capitalist and part of one world capitalist system. We support the struggles of workers in these countries against the bureaucratic ruling class."⁵¹

The ISO had its headquarters in Cleveland. The April 1983 issue of *Socialist Worker* indicated that the group had "members and branches" in twenty-four cities, most of them in the Northeast, although San Francisco and Seattle were also listed. The presence of groups in such college and university centers as Bloomington, Kent, Madison, and Northampton would seem to confirm the observation that the organization had its principal strength on the campuses.⁵²

Workers Power

The final split in the International Socialists came as a consequence of their work in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Among the people whom they recruited in the process of their participation in succeeding rank-and-file oppositions to the dominant and corrupt oligarchy in that union was Peter Camarata. For some time he was the principal figure in the union. However, in the late 1970s he split away to form his own group, Workers Power, claiming that the International Socialists were not being sufficiently loyal to their own principles and were showing too much willingness to compromise in the struggles within the Teamsters.⁵³

Workers Power published a periodical *Against the Current*. One of its themes was the need for "all tendencies of . . . the broad revolutionary left . . . to unify despite their serious political differences. . . ."

In March 1985 it was announced that Workers Power would soon merge again with the International Socialists.⁵⁴

Conclusion

More than forty-five years after the Shachtmanite split in the Socialist Workers Party there continued to exist in the United States several organizations which, although claiming basic allegiance to International Trotskyism, agreed with the original Shachtmanites that the Soviet Union and

other Communist Party-controlled regimes were not in any sense "workers' states." Like other elements of the Trotskyist movement, this tendency had splintered, and like the global International Socialist Tendency, its several factions disagreed on whether the Stalinist regimes were "bureaucratic collectivist" or "state capitalist."

U.S. Trotskyism: The Workers World Party, Spartacist League, Workers League and Their Offshoots

From its inception, the Socialist Workers Party was the major Trotskyist organization in the United States. At least until the 1980s it represented "orthodox" Trotskyism in this country.

However, beginning in the early 1930s there have always existed other parties, leagues, groups, etc. which have professed loyalty (in varying degrees) to Trotskyism. We have dealt with some of those early dissident groups in the first chapter on United States Trotskyism, and we have devoted two earlier chapters to the 1940 split in the swp and to the groups deriving more or less directly from the "Shachtmanite" tendency.

In the present chapter we shall deal with the Workers World Party, Spartacist League and Workers League, which split from the Socialist Workers Party in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and with all but one of the splinter groups having their origins in these three. In the next chapter, we shall discuss other dissident Trotskyist groups and the strange development of the National Caucus of Labor Committees.

Workers World Party

Chronologically the first of these dissident groups to break away from the Socialist Workers Party was the Workers World Party, which was established, as noted earlier, in 1959. Its principal figure was Sam Marcy. The Marcyites first emerged as the Global Class War Tendency in the Socialist Workers Party at the time of the 1948 presi-

dential election. At that time they urged the swp to support the candidacy of Henry Wallace, then running as the nominee of the Progressive Party.¹

Soon after the outbreak of the Korean War Sam Marcy issued a long internal document in the swp about that event, entitled "Memorandum on the Unfolding War and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the New Phase of the World (Permanent) Revolution." Marcy argued that the Korean War was "not a war between the nations but a war between the classes!" a passage which he underscored.²

More significant in retrospect was his argument concerning the Communist regime in China. After citing a prediction of Trotsky concerning the Chinese revolution Marcy wrote that "of course, Trotsky had in mind a genuine Communist Party grounded in revolutionary Marxism and geared to the perspective of the world revolution, rather than the party of Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai. . . . But then the latter have not been the architects and guides of the revolution, as was the case with the party of Lenin and Trotsky. On the contrary, the present Chinese leaders have been *catapulted* into power by the torrential revolutionary pressure of the Chinese peasants and workers. But theirs is nonetheless a dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry no matter how distorted and mutilated by Stalinist practices, dogmas, and perspectives. . . ."³

The swp at that point had not yet gotten around to recognizing the Chinese regime as a "workers' state," and on this issue Marcy was clearly a dissident. However, his disagreements with the majority of the party leadership did not bring him to break with the party at that time. He supported the majority in the fight with the Cochranites.

Marcy's next disagreement with the swp leadership came over the issue of the Hungarian revolution of 1956. Unlike the swp majority, Marcy and his supporters attacked the uprising in Hungary as "counter-revolutionary."⁴ Once again, Marcy did not break away from the swp on this issue.

It was not until early 1959 that the Marcyites finally left the Socialist Workers Party to establish the Workers World Party (wWP). In doing so, they clearly continued to regard themselves as Trotskyists. Indeed, in the third issue of their monthly newspaper *Workers World* they editorialized, "We are THE Trotskyists. We stand one hundred percent with all of the principled positions of Leon Trotsky, the most revolutionary communist since Lenin."⁵

According to the leaders of a small dissident faction which broke away from the Workers World Party about fifteen years after its establishment, at its inception the party was "centered in key industrial areas" and "collectively represented probably the strongest working-class base the swP had developed to date; moreover, they combined the unique historical perspective of Trotskyism (read: Marxism) with a keen understanding of how to apply that perspective to conditions existing in the world of 1959." At its inception the party was "based largely in Buffalo, Youngstown, Seattle and New York."⁶

From the establishment of the wWP its favorite propaganda tactic was one of organizing street demonstrations—even before they became the favorite tactic of the New Left in the latter half of the 1960s. One party pamphlet, celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the wWP, noted that "they set to work in this early period organizing demonstrations in the very teeth of the bitter anti-communist backlash, when much of the powerful workers' movement was scattered and in disarray. . . . Militant demonstrations were called in support of Patrice Lumumba, heroic Congolese liberation fighter; against racist discrimination practices in housing; against the repressive House Un-American Activities Committee of Congress."

In April 1962 the Workers World Party established a youth organization, first known as the Anti-Fascist Youth Committee and subsequently the Youth Against War

and Fascism (YAWF). The same party document just cited noted their perspective in launching this group. It said that "the task of organizing and building a revolutionary youth movement was seen as a high priority. The rebellions of students and working class youth in almost every revolutionary situation throughout the world have almost always been symptomatic and the precursor of a general uprising of the proletariat and its allies. Workers World Party conceived of an organization of such revolutionary youth."

The wWP and YAWF threw themselves early into the struggle against growing United States involvement in Vietnam. They claimed to have organized the first demonstrations against the war on August 3, 1962, "at a time when most Americans hadn't yet heard of Vietnam. . . ." They were very proud of the fact that Ho Chi Minh, in an interview with Wilfred Burchett, had said that "we appreciate such actions as . . . that of American Youth Against War & Fascism who recently demonstrated against the 'undeclared war.' Such activities are known here and greatly hearten our people."

wWP activity in the antiwar movement was not confined to street demonstrations. Two YAWF leaders were among those people indicated for draft evasion. Dairde Griswold and Maryann Weissman of YAWF worked with the London Secretariat of the Bertrand Russell International War Crimes Tribunal for several months. At Fort Sill, Oklahoma, they organized demonstrations at the time of the trial of Andy Stapp "for refusing to surrender anti-war literature." Out of that demonstration came the organization of the American Servicemen's Union, described somewhat enthusiastically by the wWP as being "a mass organization of rank-and-file servicemen and women, dependents, and veterans opposed to war, racism, and the privileged officer caste, and with members on U.S. bases around the globe."⁷

The American Servicemen's Union was completely dominated by the wWP and

YAWF. A group who broke with the wwp late in 1971 wrote that "the bureaucratic structure of YAWF was clearly reflected in the Union office; every prominent Union leader was a comrade, or rather a Party functionary, and if they had ever been GIs, they had long since forgotten it. They related to servicemen only through the Party line and the Party leadership. . . ."8

The wwp and YAWF involved themselves in various other movements of the 1960s and early 1970s. As their fifteenth anniversary leaflet said, "We hit the streets to defend the heroic Black uprisings in Watts, Newark, Detroit, Harlem, and other large cities, often while the Black community was under martial law and the police were riding shotgun on the demonstrations." A YAWF leader, Tom Soto, was asked by the Attica prison rioters to come into the prison and present their grievances for them. The party participated in various women's lib demonstrations as well.⁹

The Workers World Party took a part in the continuing struggles over racial integration, particularly in the schools, during the 1970s. Their most spectacular activity in this field was in the march and demonstration organized by pro-integration elements in Boston in 1975 to protest strongarm efforts by opponents of integration to thwart court orders in that city. Kay Martin has indicated the role which the wwp and YAWF saw themselves as playing in the Boston situation: "I personally was one of the organizers of the historic Boston March Against Racism last year which turned the tide against the wave of racist violence in that city. And it was the collective efforts of many hundreds of comrades who joined the march organization and gave the march all their attention and creative energy which made the emergency march possible. . . . Many considered the march an impossible task—yet it was done and 28,000 people came out and it had the immediate measurable effect of demoralizing the racists and allowing those fighting racism to stand up—

even in South Boston where a committee of Black and white parents jointly greeted the bussed students to the school in South Boston the week after the march whereas the week before there were constant racist clashes. . . ."10

The Workers World Party carried on an extensive program of literature distribution. In addition to its newspaper, *Workers World*, it published and distributed numerous books and pamphlets, under the imprint of World View Publishers. For instance, in the winter of 1973-76 the party was selling, among other things, publications on the Portuguese revolution, "The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal," Vince Copeland's *Southern Populism and Black Labor*, studies of the Allende regime in Chile, the massacre of the Communists of Indonesia, welfare, world hunger, Puerto Rican nationalism, and a variety of works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.¹¹

During the 1970s the wwp also undertook work in the organized labor movement. Kay Martin has written that "a large number of our comrades are active in their shops and have gained the workers' respect in the struggles on the shop floor. Many have been elected to positions of steward, shop chairman or chairwoman, or other positions from which they can further the workers' struggle. Organizing drives, strikes and strike support work . . . are also a very important part of our development as a factor in the struggle of labor in this period of outbacks and unemployment."¹² However, there is no evidence that the wwp gained control of any union level.

The wwp had by the 1970s developed a unique way of dealing with specific kinds of issues. There were organized within the party "caucuses" made up of members with particular backgrounds and interests. Kay Martin has noted that by the mid-1970s these included "The Women's Caucus, Third World Caucus (Black, Latin, Chicano and other Third World Comrades), Gay Caucus. . . ."13

In 1980 the Workers World Party adopted what was for it a new tactic. It ran candidates for office in the national election of that year. Deirdre Griswold, editor of *Workers World* since 1971, and Larry Holmes, a black party leader, were named for president and vice president. The wwp also put up Tom Soto, a one-time leader of the American Servicemen's Union, as its candidate for the U.S. Senate in New York State; Lydia Bayonota as nominee for the House of Representatives in upstate New York, and Preston Wood, "an activist for homosexual rights" for the State Assembly in a lower Manhattan district.¹⁴

The Workers World national candidates campaigned for almost a year throughout the country. In California they ran in the primary of the Peace and Freedom Party, where their opponents were Benjamin Spock of the Peoples Party, Gus Hall of the Communist Party, and David McReynolds of the Socialist Party. The wwp nominees came in last, getting 1,232 out of 9,092 votes cast in the primary.¹⁵ The wwp claimed to have gotten its candidates on the ballot in a dozen states.¹⁶

In the 1984 elections, the Workers World Party first supported the campaign of Jesse Jackson to get the Democratic Party nomination for president. When Jackson did not succeed, they again named their own candidates for president and vice president, Larry Holmes and Gloria La Riva. They also had a candidate for the U.S. Senate in Michigan, one nominee each for the U.S. House of Representatives in New York and California, and candidates for state legislatures in New York and Michigan.¹⁷ Holmes and La Riva were officially reported to have gotten 15,220 votes.¹⁸

The longer-range perspective of how the Workers World Party people have seen themselves is as well summed up by Kay Martin as by anyone else. He has said that "it is this rich experience in struggle which recommends us as Marxist-Leninists. Coupled with a revolutionary and thoroughly

working-class world outlook—one of support for all socialist countries and national liberation movements against imperialism—this experience has prepared us to take on the very difficult tasks which lie ahead. . . . Under the present economic conditions, the outbreak of the mass struggle is inevitable—it is only a matter of time. Our task is to prepare ourselves through the smaller struggles—and the not so small struggles—of today and yesterday for the larger ones of tomorrow."¹⁹

The Workers World Party and Maoism

Although starting their existence being, by their own lights "THE Trotskyists," within a relatively short period the Workers World Party abandoned virtually all "public" adherence to Trotsky, his doctrines and his movement. For more than a decade they were apparently more Maoist than Trotskyist.

There were probably several reasons for this ideological "deviation." For one thing, Sam Marcy, for almost a decade before launching his own splinter party, had been much more sympathetic towards the Chinese Communist Party and Mao Tse-tung's leadership than was the case with most Trotskyites. With the evolution of events this aspect of his thinking became intensified. In the second place, soon after the launching of the Workers World Party, the estrangement between the Soviet and Chinese leaderships began to become obvious, and like all far-left groups the wwp leadership had to take a position. Unlike many of them, they had, in view of their own past, no hesitation about taking the Chinese side. It is also possible, as some of their critics alleged, that they for a while had some hope of receiving the U.S. "franchise" from the Chinese Communist leadership.

Finally, as dissidents who broke away from the wwp in the early 1970s alleged, it may well be true that Marcy and his associates found the burden of the Trotskyist tradition

too heavy an impediment in their recruiting efforts in the early years of the party's existence. They had taken out with them all of the SWP members who generally sympathized with their main points of view; the general atmosphere in the labor movement and among intellectuals was a conservative one, not conducive to recruiting people to the ideas of a maverick Trotskyist group.

Hence, the principal potential recruiting ground for the new Workers World Party was among those who [largely as a result of the events of 1956] had abandoned the Communist Party and its periphery. But these people were traditionally hostile to Trotskyism. As a consequence, the WWP dissidents subsequently argued, "Workers World soon found it necessary not only to drop Trotsky's name from its organ, but to drop Trotskyist literature from WWP bookshelves in the New York City headquarters."²⁰

This turn away from formal commitment to Trotskyism continued, a fact reflected in a 1975 supplement to *Workers World* featuring the literature of the party which it was then selling. In this four-page document there is no mention of any work by Trotsky, although there are numerous writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and even of Vo Nguyen Giap and Kwame Nkrumah. The only publication of a Trotskyist nature is perhaps one by "Mandel" (with no indication whether this is by Ernest Mandel) on "Soviet Women."²¹

During most of the first dozen years of its existence, the Workers World Party's orientation was one of particularly class support for the Chinese Communist Party and regime. In 1976 Deirdre Griswold wrote an article summarizing the party's attitude towards China since WWP's inception. She noted that in their relations to the Chinese revolution the party had always had "the kind of political independence that enables revolutionaries to speak up if they see that cause being damaged by the policies of leaders of socialist countries subject to the tremendous pressures of hostile imperialism."

Griswold added, however, that "this has not prevented it from being the most enthusiastic fighter for the Chinese revolution, especially in those years when the masses in China were sweeping away one entrenched institution of class society after another, and when China's international policies were more and more providing a rallying point for the world working class and the liberation movements in the struggle against imperialism."

Deirdre Griswold noted that the first issue of the WWP paper had carried a front page article hailing the establishment of communes during the Great Leap Forward. She observed that "People's China was extremely hard-pressed and isolated on the issues of Tibet and the border war with India. Workers World Party stood virtually alone in this country in its defense of China on these questions."

The WWP also supported the Great Cultural Revolution. Deirdre Griswold noted that "In all the great bourgeois revolutions, and in the first proletarian revolution in backward Russia, the period of intense forward motion was followed by a decline and a partial reaction. . . . In China, this period of reaction was anticipated by the revolutionary leadership, who called on the masses to meet and defeat it with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." She added that "In a series of articles in *Workers World* Marcy explained that the Cultural Revolution was a genuinely leftist development that found inspiration in the first workers' government, the Paris Commune, and that it was responding to the rise of a restorationist element in China. . . ."²²

However, as Deirdre Griswold explained, the Workers World Party did not accept the Chinese description of the Soviet Union as "social imperialist." She claimed that "This new class characterization of the Soviet Union by the Chinese CP . . . opened the door to a U.S.-China rapprochement." Clearly the WWP did not support this. Miss Griswold noted that "the tragic end of Lin

Piao, former Defense Minister and successor to Mao according to the Chinese Constitution, and the disappearance of his associates marked the end of an entire stage of the Chinese Revolution." She cited Marcy as writing that "peaceful coexistence and accommodation with the West is what Mao proposed as the new foreign policy. . . . This is what the 'radical faction' . . . rejected and opposed. They were vanquished as earlier opponents of peaceful accommodation with the West were vanquished in the long period following Lenin's death in the Soviet Union."

As to the policies followed by the Chinese party and regime after 1971, Deirdre Griswold concluded that "proletarian revolutionaries can only be saddened by and opposed to such harmful policies, and promote, in the words of Ho Chi Minh, the 'restoration of unity among the fraternal parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, in a way which conforms to both reason and sentiment.'"²³

The Workers World Party became increasingly critical of the Chinese leadership after Mao's death and the fall of the "Gang of Four." Marcy summed up the party's position in June 1978 when he wrote that "under Mao there was a deep contradiction between his struggle to continue the process of reforming China's social and political institutions on a revolutionary basis, and his reactionary foreign policy in relation to the USSR and other socialist countries. . . . What is not fully understood is that the current leaders are bent on 'harmonizing' the domestic situation with their foreign policy, but their resolution of this truly fundamental contradiction is a reactionary one; that is they are attacking the revolutionary domestic achievements of the Mao era."²⁴

Remnants of Trotskyism in WWP Ideology

In spite of the Workers World Party's transformation into a Maoist party (however dis-

sident), and its abandonment of all formal relationship with Trotskyism, there did remain certain residual Trotskyist elements in its philosophy or ideology. They still maintained a more or less orthodox Trotskyist position (if perhaps a somewhat exaggerated one) on the question of the nature of the Soviet Union and other Communist Party-controlled states.

Marcy summed up this position of the wwp in an article in May 1976. He wrote that "we, of course, believe neither that there is a new exploiting class in the Soviet Union, nor that there has been a return of the bourgeoisie to power there under the guide [sic] of Marxist-Leninist phraseology. We firmly adhere to the position that the USSR is a workers' state, although it has undergone a severe strain, deterioration, and erosion of revolutionary principles, and is moreover headed by a privileged and absolutist bureaucracy which limits, distorts, and has on many occasions endangered the very existence of the socialist forms of organization in the USSR. . . ." Marcy continued:

. . . the underlying social system of the USSR is infinitely superior to that of the most developed, the most "glorious" and the most "democratic" of the imperialist states. Whatever the drawbacks of the Soviet Union, whatever its trials and tribulations, whatever false policies have been imposed on the USSR by its leaders, it has nevertheless been able to achieve tremendous social, cultural and material progress for the masses which no capitalist state could possibly have accomplished in the circumstances under which the USSR was originally founded and developed. Indeed, the USSR is rooted in a socialist system superior to the capitalist system. It is our fundamental political position that, regardless of the Soviet bureaucracy, the USSR contains a new social formation, based on a historically superior mode of production, and is progressive in

relation to monopoly capitalism in the same way that capitalism was a superior system in relation to feudalism, as indeed feudalism was a higher social system than slavery.²⁵

The Spartacist League

Founding of the Spartacist League

As a consequence of the factional struggle which raged within the Socialist Workers Party between 1961 and 1964, two dissident groups emerged, the Spartacist League and the Workers League, both of which continued to exist almost a quarter of a century later. In an earlier chapter we have discussed some of the details of this struggle within the swp. Here we will trace the trajectory of the two groups once they were outside the Socialist Workers Party.

Those dissidents who constituted the Revolutionary Tendency who were to form the Spartacist League were the first group to be expelled from the Socialist Workers Party as a consequence of the factional fight. On November 1, 1963, the swp Political Committee adopted a resolution, the operative portion of which read. "Because of their violations of party loyalty the Political Committee hereby suspends from party membership Comrades Robertson, Mage, White, Harper and Ireland . . . The Political Committee refers to the plenum of the National Committee the question of further disciplinary action against the Robertson-Mage-White group."²⁶ Almost two months later, the plenum of the National Committee by 18-1 expelled the five suspended members.²⁷

Shortly after their expulsion the dissidents issued the first number of their periodical *Spartacist*, dated February-March 1964 and described as being "published bi-monthly by supporters of the Revolutionary Tendency expelled from the Socialist Workers Party." In its editorial, the expellees said, "We are publishing the *Spartacist* because our expulsion from the Socialist Workers

Party cuts off our expression of views within that party. We will continue to print a public organ pending readmission to the swp and resumption of our proper role within it."²⁸ The paper contained several documents relative to the split.

The expelled swpers sought to appeal their expulsion to the United Secretariat, which under the principle of "democratic centralism" should, they felt, have the right to reverse the action of the swp. They sent a letter dated February 23, 1964, to Pierre Frank of the USEC. This letter said that "having exhausted all presently available recourse within the American party, we are now writing to formally request that the United Secretariat express its opinion on behalf of the restoration of our organizational rights in what is, politically, your American section."²⁹

Pierre Frank replied on April 17, sending a copy of a resolution of the United Secretariat which, after a long introduction, said that "the United Secretariat (1) holds that the so-called 'appeal' by leaders of the Robertson group is a mere publicity move that seeks to advance hostile factional aims; (2) condemns the course taken by the Robertson group, particularly its unrestrained public attacks against the Socialist Workers Party, as injurious to the interests of the world Trotskyist movement."³⁰

That was not quite the end of the matter. On May 18, 1965, Harry Turner, writing "for the Spartacist Resident Editorial Board," sent a letter to USEC asking that the Spartacist group be permitted to appear before the World Congress of the United Secretariat which was to meet in June, to present its appeal from expulsion.³¹ In reply, Pierre Frank, on behalf of USEC, said that "we call your attention first of all to the fact that the Fourth International has no organizational connection with the Socialist Workers party and consequently has no jurisdiction in a problem such as you raise; namely, the application of democratic centralism as it affects the organization either as a whole or in

individual instances."³² This consideration, of course, had not prevented the United Secretariat from taking its earlier action in April 1964.

Meanwhile, the Spartacist group had been in touch with Gerry Healy and the International Committee. After the *SWP*'s expulsion of the Tim Wohlforth group, Healy first took the position that the two factions which had been thrown out of the *SWP* should unite to form a single affiliate of the International Committee. However, when representatives of both the Spartacist group and the American Committee for the Fourth International (ACFI) had a meeting in Montreal with Gerry Healy and other representatives of the IC, it was agreed that both American groups would be regarded as being associated with the International Committee.³³

In conformity with that agreement both the ACFI and the Spartacists were represented at the April 1966 third conference of the International Committee in London. At that meeting James Robertson delivered a statement on behalf of the Spartacist delegation, which conflicted on several points with the position of the Socialist Labor League and its major figure, Gerry Healy.

Robertson first devoted his attention to Pabloism, saying that it had begun "in 1943, following the failure of Leon Trotsky's perspective of the break-up of the Soviet bureaucracy and of new October revolutions in the aftermath of the war; this failure resulted from the inability to forge revolutionary parties . . ." ³⁴ He agreed with a French delegate who had said that "there is no family of Trotskyism." "Nevertheless," he added, "there are now four organized international currents all claiming to be Trotskyist, and spoken of as 'Trotskyist' in some conventional sense. This state of affairs must be resolved through splits and fusions." He concluded that it was necessary "to consummate the struggle for the actual reconstruction of the FI, culminating in a world congress to re-found it."³⁵

Robertson also discussed the emergence of regimes such as those in China and Castro Cuba, arguing that in these revolutionary movements the peasantry had "an exceptionally independent role," resulting in "a social transformation led by the petty-bourgeoisie. . . ." The result of this, he argued, was that "all that has come out of China and Cuba was a state of the same order as that issuing out of the political counter-revolution of Stalin in the Soviet Union. . . . That is why we are led to define states such as these as *deformed workers states*. . . ." In this discussion Robertson was critical of some of the formulations of the British and French affiliates of the International Committee.³⁶

Healy and the leadership of the *SL* clearly disagreed with some of Robertson's basic formulations. As a consequence, the Spartacists were finally eliminated from the London conference and consequently from the International Committee. The excuse for this was alleged "insubordination" by Robertson and the Spartacist delegation.³⁷

Five months after the London Conference the Spartacist group formally established the Spartacist League. It elected a Central Committee chaired by Robertson and adopted a Declaration of Principles. That document started by saying, "The Spartacist League of the U.S. is a revolutionary organization which, as part of the international revolutionary movement, is committed to the task of building the party which will lead the working class to the victory of the socialist revolution in the United States." It declared the league to be the inheritor of the traditions of "Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, and Liebknecht," and "of Marxism as developed in theory and practice by V. I. Lenin and L. D. Trotsky, as embodied in the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International and by the Transitional Program and other documents adopted by the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International." It was "the continuator of the revolutionary heritage of

the early Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party."³⁸

The Declaration said that "We stand with all these groups seeking the rebirth of the Fourth International and, as a first step, the creation of a *bona fide* International Committee of revolutionary Trotskyists based upon a real and living democratic centralism." It adopted the more or less orthodox Trotskyist position that the USSR was a "degenerated workers state" and the other Communist Party-controlled ones were "deformed workers states."

The Declaration claimed that "within the Trotskyist movement the problems posed by the post 1943 Stalinist expansions have given rise to the revisionist current of Pabloism . . . characterized chiefly by a renunciation of the necessity for revolutionary leadership and an adaptation to existing petty-bourgeois and Stalinist leaderships. This deterioration of theory has led to the degeneration of the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky, and to its organizational breakup. The Spartacist League, by contributing to the theoretical clarification of the Marxist movement and to the reorganizing of the workers' necessary organizational weapons, upholds the revolutionary proletarian principles of Marxism and will carry them forward to the vanguard of the working class."³⁹

Evolution of the Spartacist League

The Spartacist League remained for many years an organization of young people, most of them middle class and college educated, or still in college. It was a small group, estimated by Harry Turner in 1969 to have about one hundred members.⁴⁰ The SL was largely isolated from the rest of the radical movement in the United States, and after the International Committee's conference in 1966, it was without counterparts in other countries.⁴¹ Its periodical, *Spartacist*, came out sporadically, ten months passing in 1967-68 between the appearance of the

tenth and the eleventh number, although it was supposed to be a bimonthly.⁴² A resolution adopted at the 1979 conference of the Spartacist youth organization noted that "from the time of the founding conference of the SL in 1966 . . . the organization was involved in little mass work of any kind. The main arena for mass work in the early days of the Spartacist tendency was the civil rights movement, but with the rise of black nationalism we were effectively frozen out of the black movement by 1968."

In spite of the youthfulness of most of the Spartacists, they did not have a significant influence in the growing left-wing student movement of the mid-1960s. The cited resolution noted that the only Spartacist student organization was the Young Socialist League at Cornell. It "campaigns in support of civil rights and black self-defense, collecting money for the Deacons for Defense under the slogan, 'Every Dime Buys a Bullet!' . . . the YSL shocked and polarized the entire campus by collecting funds for the NLF, making concrete our call for 'military victory to the NLF.'"⁴³

In its early years the Spartacist League was very largely dominated by James Robertson. Harry Turner, a severe critic of Robertson, described his leading role. He noted that "Cde. Robertson has played a key and vital role in the formation and continued operation of the Spartacist movement. He has, until recently, been the only person in its ranks willing and able to assume the responsibility of being a full-time functionary. He has shown himself to be an articulate, audacious leader, able to deal incisively with many questions arising in the anti-war, student, electoral, and certain trade union arenas in which the non-specializing college graduate predominates. . . . Cde. Robertson has demonstrated the capacity to take into account the many-sided aspects of a situation, and simultaneously deal with several political and organizational questions in depth, and with flexibility in tactical application."⁴⁴

In 1967-68 the first important internal struggle in the history of the Spartacist League developed. It was basically over the determination of the majority, led by Robertson, to keep the organization oriented principally toward the student movement, and the desire of the opposition element, led mainly by Harry Turner, to turn the League toward the labor movement and particularly in the direction of trying to work among black and Hispanic trade unionists.⁴⁵

In September 1967 the Political Bureau of the League had unanimously adopted a Memorandum on the Negro Struggle, submitted by Turner, providing for the League to form an organization to stimulate establishment of union rank-and-file caucuses, particularly among minority workers, to fight both union leaders and employers. In pursuance of this, a "pan-union Militant Labor Civil Rights Committee (MLCRC)" was organized in New York City by the Spartacist League local there. In the following year Robertson pushed a motion through a membership meeting of the New York local to dissolve the MLCRC and to try to organize instead separate caucuses in different unions. It was over this issue that the factional fight developed, although broader philosophical issues also came to be discussed.⁴⁶

During part of this controversy Turner and his supporters were allied with people who were attracted by the French Voix Ouvrière group's technique of propagandizing among factory workers. However, before the struggle had been completed those people left the organization to establish their own group.⁴⁷ By the end of 1968 Turner and his principal associates had been driven out of the Spartacist League.

As a consequence of this factional struggle which took up much of the leaders' time and energy, the Spartacists did not get deeply involved in the radicalization of the students which was under way at that time. Thus, they did not participate in the struggle in the Students for a Democratic Society between the very far left and anti-union

Weathermen faction and the labor-oriented group led principally by the Maoist Progressive Labor Party.⁴⁸

However, in 1969 the Spartacists did attempt to participate in the SDS conflict. They sided with the PLP faction at the SDS convention where the organization split. Early in 1970 they established the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus (RMC), and this group "functioned both as a caucus within SDS and a loose Trotskyist youth group."⁴⁹ The Spartacist League also sought to use the RMC as its principal instrument in the movement against the Vietnam War. The 1979 SYL resolution noted that "The SL/RMC sought to create a class polarization in the U.S. around the Vietnam War . . . the RMC fought for a working class orientation—for labor political strikes against the war. . . ."⁵⁰

This participation in the SDS conflict and the antiwar movement paid dividends for the Spartacist League. Between 1970 and 1972 its membership increased three times over.⁵¹ Its youth group, which in 1971 was renamed the Revolutionary Communist Youth, "grew four fold in 1971-1972."⁵²

In 1971 the Spartacist League adopted a "Memorandum on the Transformation of the Spartacist League," which defined it as a propagandist organization preparing the ground for establishment of a revolutionary party. It also provided for reorganization of the group's work on the basis of special "commissions" dealing with labor, women and youth.⁵³

Thereafter, much of the SL's effort was concentrated on publishing and circulating its periodicals. The League itself began to issue *Workers Vanguard*, a weekly paper, on a regular basis; its youth group (which in 1973 changed its name again to Spartacus Youth League) put out a monthly *Young Spartacus*, and the Women's Commission of the SL began to publish a quarterly *Women and Revolution*. A typical copy of this last periodical carried articles on "Feminism vs. Marxism: Origins of the Conflict," recounting the troubles of Victoria Woodhull with the First International in the

1870s; the struggle of Spartacists within the "Socialist-Feminist" Berkeley/Oakland Women's Union; and an attack on "Third Worldism."⁵⁴

In 1971 the Spartacist League leadership ordered the "industrialization" of the League, that is, that the SL members get jobs in industry, affiliate with their appropriate unions, and seek to win a labor base for the organization. This maneuver caused certain problems for the organization, and particularly for its youth group. As the SYL resolution of 1979 commented, "while the RCY was successful in establishing campus fractions on a number of the major college campuses, the recruitment that resulted did not compensate for the loss of a number of our most talented and mature youth activists to trade-union implantation and other party responsibilities."⁵⁵ There is no evidence that the Spartacists won appreciable influence in any union.

After the gains which the Spartacist League and its youth affiliate made during the early 1970s, the membership of the two groups leveled off, or even declined, in subsequent years. The Spartacus Youth League 1979 resolution already cited noted that "though the party has continued to recruit both from the SYL and elsewhere, the membership of the SYL has declined each year since 1975. The effects on the party have been evident. The youth recruited to our movement mainly off the campuses, have been attracted largely on the basis of abstract ideas rather than through actual social struggle and consequently are particularly vulnerable to the pressures of bourgeois society."⁵⁶

In 1979 the Spartacus Youth League suffered a significant split. A number of its principal leaders, including those associated with editing its periodical, *Young Spartacus*, were expelled, on the grounds of excessive "Intellectualism," and of not being sufficiently subordinate to Spartacist League control.⁵⁷

Virtually since its inception the Spartacist League was particularly active in trying to

recruit people from other radical groups. Indeed, leaders of other groups tended to regard that as being one of the principal characteristics of the Spartacists.⁵⁸ They became inveterate distributors of leaflets and sellers of their own literature at the meetings organized by other groups. Their frequent heckling of speakers at such meetings sometimes brought about efforts to ban them from the sessions.⁵⁹

Sometimes the SL published evidence of its success in recruiting from other radical groups. Thus, in the report of its Fourth National Conference in 1974, it was recounted that among those participating were "26 former members of the SWP/YSA, 15 of PL/WSA, 11 of the IS, as well as lesser numbers from numerous other organizations including the Weathermen, Black Panthers, RU, SP/YRSL and CP."⁶⁰

In the late 1970s the Spartacists began to run occasional candidates in general elections. In 1978 they named Marjorie Stamberg as candidate for the New York State Assembly from the 64th District (Greenwich Village). She was reported to have gotten 909 votes, or 3.3 percent of the total, and to have done better than the SWP and Communist Party nominees.⁶¹ In 1981 the Spartacists ran Don Andrews, a black member of the SL's Central Committee, and Ann Weekley, "a supporter of the Spartacist League," for the Detroit city council.⁶² In 1983 they put up Martha Phillips as nominee for city council member at large in Oakland.⁶³

In the late 1970s, too, the Spartacist League began to organize meetings against the Ku Klux Klan and other far-right groups. They were particularly pleased with a demonstration they organized in November 1982 at the foot of Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., attended by a reported 5,000 people, which had the endorsement of a number of union locals and resulted in the Klan's decision to abandon a plan for a march down the Mall.⁶⁴

During the late 1970s and early 1980s the Spartacist League adopted a number of posi-

tions on international issues which differentiated them more or less drastically from the other groups in the United States which claimed more or less loyalty to Trotskyism. Three of these are particularly worthy of note: Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Solidarity movement in Poland.

Unlike most of the far left in the United States, the Spartacists did not greet with unalloyed enthusiasm the fall of the Shah and the rise to power of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran. While the struggle against the Shah was still under way they raised the slogan "Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!"⁶⁵ After the triumph of Khomeini they continued to denounce the theocratic dictatorship, and to be particularly critical of other Trotskyist groups which were giving support, however "critical," to the Khomeini regime.

Also in contrast to most of the rest of the far left in the United States and elsewhere, the Spartacists enthusiastically supported the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. *Workers Vanguard*, in one of the early issues following the Soviet move, had the headline "Hail Red Army!" with the subtitle "While Carter Stews, Soviet Army Rolls Back Afghan Mullahs." The accompanying article proclaimed that "from a military point of view the Soviet intervention may or may not have been wise, though certainly it is deeply just to oppose the Islamic reactionary insurgents backed by imperialism. There can be no question that for revolutionaries our side in this conflict is with the Red Army. In fact, although it is surely uncalled for militarily, a natural response on the part of the world's young leftists would be an enthusiastic desire to join an international brigade to Afghanistan to fight the CIA-connected mullahs. . . ."⁶⁶

Finally, unlike virtually all of the far left except the U.S. Communist Party, the Spartacists were strongly opposed to the rise of Solidarity in Poland. Their position was well synthesized in the title of a pamphlet the st-

issued in October 1981, *Solidarnosc: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers*. The pamphlet consisted principally of reprints of articles from *Workers Vanguard* during the months following the Gdansk strike of August 1980 denouncing various Solidarity leaders and the intellectual advisers of the new Polish labor movement.⁶⁷

The Spartacist League does not normally publish its membership figures. However, in 1980 Joseph Schwartz of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee estimated that the Spartacists had about 300 members.⁶⁸

Offshoots of the Spartacist League

The Revolutionary Workers League

Subsequent to the split of Harry Turner and his associates in 1968, the Spartacist League suffered two other small splits. One of these took place in the late 1970s. The Revolutionary Workers League was founded in 1976 by two ex-members of the Spartacist League, Peter Sollenberger and Leland Sanderson, former Harvard graduate students who had moved to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. There they sought to organize a union of clerical workers employed by the university. They also became involved with the gay and lesbian rights groups at the university. They issued a periodical, *Revolutionary Worker*.⁶⁹

With the formation of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee (TILC) under the sponsorship of the Workers Socialist League of Great Britain, led by the ex-auto-workers' union leader Alan Thornett, the Revolutionary Workers League became its U.S. affiliate. Even after a crisis in the TILC over the Falklands (Malvinas) War of 1983 the rwl continued its affiliation.⁷⁰ In 1981 the Revolutionary Workers League merged with another small group, the Socialist League-Democratic Centralist (SL-DC), consisting of ex-followers of Tim Wohlforth before Wohlforth's expulsion from the Work-

ers League. Headed by Steve Bryant, it had its principal center in the San Francisco area.⁷¹

After the merger of these groups under the name of the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), that organization began to publish a new periodical, *Workers Struggle*. The organization strongly supported the Polish Solidarity. It also sought to work with anti-administration forces within the United Auto Workers in the Detroit area. Thus, in November 1982 the RWL supported that so-called United Front Caucus in Local 600 at the River Rouge plant. That ticket received about 10 percent of the vote. There is no indication of how many members, if any, the RWL may have had in Local 600.⁷²

In 1982 Leon Pérez of the Internationalist Workers Party (Fourth International) credited the RWL with about forty members.⁷³ By 1984 the RWL was in discussion with the Internationalist Workers Party (FI). Within the Peace and Freedom Party of California (PFP), the legally recognized "socialist" party in the state, members of the two groups worked together at the PFP's August 1984 convention against the majority element more or less dominated by the Communist Party.⁷⁴

In October 1982 the IWP(FI) had proposed negotiations with the RWL for possible general cooperation between the two groups. Although the RWL did participate in an Emergency National Trotskyist Conference organized by the IWP(FI) in 1983, nothing further came of negotiations between the two groups at that time.⁷⁵ However, the IWP(FI) periodical reported in August 1984 that "a debate has begun between the two organizations about the need to build a single revolutionary, Marxist, Trotskyist organization in the United States." The RWL, which apparently was by then no longer affiliated with the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, accepted a suggestion that it send a delegate to the Morenoist Internationalist Workers League's forthcoming world congress.⁷⁶

The External Tendency (ET)

The other schism in the Spartacist League was that of the so-called External Tendency (ET). It was officially proclaimed in October 1982 when a "Declaration of an external tendency of the ist" was issued. The exact nature of the issues between the ET and the Spartacist League remained somewhat obscure at least to an outsider. The October 1982 declaration claimed that "while the SL's program remains revolutionary, its leadership collective increasingly exhibits hyper-centralist, paranoid and personalist characteristics. These tendencies on the part of the leadership have reached a point where they call into question both the possibility of significantly enlarging the organization and of reproducing Trotskyist cadres within it."⁷⁷ In addition to this familiar "organizational" complaint, the ET appears to have had differences with the SL leadership over its attitudes toward the Soviet Union, trade union tactics, the U.S. intervention in Lebanon in 1982, and several other issues. There were counterparts to the External Tendency of the United States in Germany and Canada.⁷⁸

The Morenoist periodical *Working Class Opposition* claimed in July 1985 that the Spartacist League had lost about half of its membership and cadres since 1982 as the result of the ET defection and other internal conflicts.⁷⁹

The Workers League

Early Development

The second group to emerge from the 1963-64 split in the Socialist Workers Party was that which came to be called the Workers League. It originated as a division within the Revolutionary Tendency which had challenged the Dobbs-Hansen leadership's position on the Cuban Revolution, the "reunification" of the Fourth International, and other issues.

From its inception the group which was

to form the Workers League proclaimed its adherence to the line advocated by the British Socialist Labor League led by Gerry Healy. In the document dated November 13, 1962, announcing its separation from the majority of the Revolutionary Tendency led by James Robertson and others, the group made this clear. They started their "Call for the Reorganization of the Minority Tendency" by saying that "the tendency expresses its general political agreement with the tendency of the International Committee which has agreement around the 1961 International Perspectives resolution presented by the Socialist Labour League."

This "call" stated the differences of the group, led by Wohlforth and including among others Albert Philips and Fred Mazelis, with the Revolutionary Tendency leadership headed by Robertson. For one thing, they opposed the characterization of the SWP as a whole as being "centrist," commenting that "to characterize the SWP majority as a finished centrist tendency is to give up the political battle before it has begun." The document stressed that "the tendency must recognize that the SWP is the main instrument for the realization of socialism in the U.S. . . . Our comrades must therefore work as loyal party members . . . and accepting the administrative decisions of the leadership even though we might be very much against them."⁸⁰ At the time of this "call," Wohlforth, who was a member of the Political Bureau of the SWP, wrote a fellow party member in San Francisco that "Let there be no doubt about it—we do not want a split internationally or domestically."⁸¹ When, in fact, the Robertson group were expelled from the SWP in December 1963, "the Wohlforth-Philips grouping" opposed the move.⁸²

At the SWP convention of July 1983 at which reunification with the "Pabloites" to form the United Secretariat of the Fourth International was agreed upon, Wohlforth was removed as member of the Political Committee. In preparation for that conven-

tion the Reorganized Minority Tendency (RMT), as the Wohlforth group called itself, had submitted a draft resolution in which it made "proposals that the SWP make work in the trade unions, among the workers who were beginning to move into struggle, not only against their employers, but also against their trade union bureaucrats, and to win Black and Spanish-speaking workers on this basis. . . ."⁸³

In developing its position the RMT had worked closely with Gerry Healy and the International Committee of the Fourth International. In fact, in refusing to condemn the majority of the SWP leadership as being "centrist," Wohlforth had been following instructions from Healy, instructions to which the Robertson group refused to adhere.⁸⁴

Attempts of the Wohlforth group to continue the struggle within the Socialist Workers Party proved fruitless. A few months after the expulsion of the Robertson faction Wohlforth and his followers were also expelled from the SWP. The particular issue over which this action came was a controversy over the entry of the Ceylonese Trotskyist party, the Lanka Sama Samaja, into the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike. The Wohlforth group immediately formed the American Committee for the Fourth International (ACFI), and began to publish a mimeographed periodical, *Bulletin of International Socialism* (later shortened to *Bulletin*).⁸⁵

During its early years the Wohlforth group, which in 1966 became the Workers League, defined its position on a number of issues, on which it was clearly separated from the stands of the Socialist Workers Party. These questions included the Soviet-Chinese feud, the Vietnam War, the race issue in the United States, and the formation of a Labor Party.

In an early issue of the *Bulletin* the ACFI stated its position on the Sino-Soviet controversy. It asked:

What position should revolutionaries take on the Sino-Soviet dispute? Revolu-

tionaries must realize that the major internal threat to the workers state and to the whole proletarian struggle comes at the present time from the Kremlin and those to the right of the Kremlin in Eastern Europe. . . . Thus we cannot stand aside in this great dispute between the USSR leadership and the CCP and say "a plague on both your houses." The major threat both to the defense of the workers states and to the future development of the whole world revolution comes at the present time from the Khrushchevists. . . . The Chinese, on the other hand, have been forced to make some searching criticisms of Khrushchevism, criticisms which we know are also of Stalinism itself even though the Chinese cannot face up to this. . . . At the same time we have no illusions about the Chinese. . . ."⁸⁶

Some years later, with the outbreak of the Great Cultural Revolution in China, the Workers League gave that movement at least qualified backing. Thus, a throwaway for a meeting on "Hands Off the Chinese Revolution" proclaimed "Conditional support of 'Red Guards'—the duty of every revolutionist."⁸⁷ At the same time the *Bulletin* reprinted an editorial from its British counterpart written by Mike Banda which made the same argument.⁸⁸

The ACFI-Workers League took a distinctly different attitude toward the Vietnam War from that of the swp. Unlike the Socialist Workers Party concentration of its antiwar efforts on building as wide a coalition as possible in favor of getting the United States out of the war, the ACFI strongly supported Vietcong victory in the conflict. As early as April 1965 the *Bulletin* endorsed Gerry Healy's proclamation that "we are not talking about peace. We are talking about participating in class war. We hope the Vietcong will hammer the daylights out of the Americans. We are for the defeat of the Americans. . . ."⁸⁹

The ACFI-Workers League also strongly re-

jected the swp's line of rapprochement with Black Nationalists in the United States. Their position was summed up in the comments that "what Negro militants have to understand is that the problem they face is essentially a class problem and that the problem is directly related to the problems of poor white workers." This same statement noted that "the only way to build the forces amongst the Negro population . . . is on the basis of a program that corresponds to the needs of the vast majority of the population. This program must, in addition, be tied to a program of independent working class political action. . . ."⁹⁰

From its inception as an independent organization the Wohlforth group evidenced its hope to develop influence within the trade union movement. With the seventh issue of its periodical it launched a regular feature, "Labor Scope," which provided information and support for the struggles of various unions.⁹¹

The Workers League strongly urged the formation of a Labor Party. Lucy St. John, then editor of *Bulletin*, wrote early in 1968 that "the next great leap of the American working class will be the creation of its own party. . . . Such a party cannot be content to wrest reforms from capitalists at a time when the capitalists must wrest gains from the workers or the system will go under. Thus of necessity the creation of such a party must be seen as a struggle against not only the capitalists but also the labor bureaucracy and a struggle for not simply reforms but transitional demands which pose the necessity of the workers running the government themselves and in their own interests wiping out the capitalist system to achieve their own needs."⁹²

The Workers League formed a group to carry on agitation for a labor party, the Trade Union Alliance for a Labor Party (TUALP). Much of the propaganda work of the League for some time was conducted in the name of the TUALP rather than of the Workers League itself. This tactic was criticized by their Brit-

ish comrades of the Socialist Labor League and subsequently Wohlforth admitted that the British had been right in labeling it "liquidationist."⁹³

In spite of its orientation toward the more Trotskyist emphasis on trying to appeal to the organized workers at a time when the swp was seeking primarily to gain followers in the predominantly middle-class antiwar movement and New Left, and among black nationalists, women's liberationists, and gays, the Workers League had only limited success. They achieved no appreciable trade union influence, even on a local level, and the League clearly remained an organization of aging middle-class youth.

Much of the attention of the Workers League was centered on publishing and selling its newspaper, the *Bulletin*. In November 1969 the paper, which was by then being printed rather than mimeographed, became a weekly. Lucy St. John, the paper's editor, proclaimed in the first issue of the weekly paper that "this is indeed the epoch of Trotskyism and the construction of mass revolutionary parties as part of an international movement. This is the meaning of the first daily Trotskyist paper published by our British comrades. The publication of the weekly *Bulletin* is the first step toward the building of a mass party of the working class in the U.S."⁹⁴ The League was ultimately able to buy its own web offset press and to issue the paper twice a week.⁹⁵

The League centered much of its attention on other far left elements. It polemicized frequently with the Spartacists. In its first year or so, its periodical carried considerable material on the Progressive Labor Party, apparently with some hope of winning that group away from Maoism and toward Trotskyism. In 1969 *Bulletin* carried a series of articles by Tim Wohlforth, calling on members of the swp to look into their party's history to find the reasons for its succumbing to "Pabloism,"⁹⁶ and in 1970 the paper proposed to other Trotskyist groups a joint commemoration of the Lenin Centen-

nial and to the swp that they have a joint Trotsky memorial meeting.⁹⁷ Neither invitation was accepted.

The leaders of the Workers League considered that one of their strong points as a Trotskyist organization was their international affiliation. At the first conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International in London in April 1966, the Workers League, rather than the Spartacists, was accepted as the United States affiliate of that body.⁹⁸ Thereafter the Workers League frequently emphasized in its propaganda that it was a member of the only "real" Fourth International. When the International Committee split in 1971 the Workers League continued to be affiliated with that faction led by Gerry Healy of the Socialist Labor League of Great Britain.

In 1974 the Workers League for the first time attempted to carry out electoral activity. It organized a "Workers Party" slate in the election for congress in two districts in New York City, naming Helen Halyard and Terry Delgado as its candidates in the 14th and 12th districts, the latter running against Representative Shirley Chisholm in Brooklyn.⁹⁹

Undoubtedly the high point of Workers League activity and influence was in the very early 1970s. In 1970 the group was able to hold two more or less successful regional conferences, one in the East, one in the West. At the Western meeting in San Francisco more than seventy people attended.¹⁰⁰

At the end of 1971 the Workers League was for the first time able to launch its own youth organization, the Young Socialists. At least two previous attempts had failed. Among those who addressed the founding conference of this organization were Tim Wohlforth and the editor of the *Bulletin*, Lucy St. John.¹⁰¹ The group's second conference was held in December 1973, with 350 people said to have been in attendance. *Young Socialist*, the youth group's periodical, was particularly directed to young workers, and among its features for about a year

was a two-page centerfold recounting "Heroes of the American Labor Movement."¹⁰²

*The Workers League, Gerry Healy,
and the International Committee*

Within a year after the League's youth affiliate was established, the WL had entered into a serious crisis. It resulted in most of those who had founded the organization and led it during its first decade leaving the organization, and began a long-term decline in the Workers League.

There were probably several causes for the crisis. Leaders of some of the rival Trotskyist groups felt that in the League's drive to issue and distribute a semiweekly paper it had "worked its people to death," ultimately generating disaffection.¹⁰³ Undoubtedly there were strong differences among the leadership on a number of issues, particularly the effort to use the Young Socialists as a vehicle for winning influence for the WL among organized workers.¹⁰⁴ Finally, the increasingly bizarre attitudes and behavior of Gerry Healy, the head of the International Committee, with which the Workers League was affiliated, as well as his direct interference in the internal affairs of the League was a major factor in the crisis and decline of the organization.

For about a year in 1973 and 1974 a factional struggle was waged within the Workers League. On the one side was Tim Wohlforth and those supporting him and on the other a group led by Lucy St. John and Dennis O'Casey. As a consequence, the Workers League was said (by the Spartacists) to have lost about 150 members, including "most of the central WL leadership and . . . many of the more able youth the WL has managed to recruit over the past period. . . ."¹⁰⁵ Although Tim Wohlforth survived this struggle as the leader and National Secretary of the Workers League, he was suddenly ousted from his position in August 1974 and subsequently resigned from the organization, as a result of Healy's direct intervention.

This was by no means the first time that Healy had personally participated in the affairs of the Workers League. Subsequent to his ouster from the WL leadership, Wohlforth recounted that early in 1973 Healy had attended "a critically important National Committee Plenum of the League." Wohlforth added that "the main thrust of Comrade Healy's intervention at that Plenum was to fight for an understanding that the center of the world capitalist crisis was the crisis of American capitalism. If this was grasped, then we could understand the explosive nature of class relations which would develop in the United States simultaneously with revolutionary outburst in Europe. . . . Comrade Healy stressed the importance of seeing a labor party in this revolutionary context with workers defense committees, Councils of Action type organizations, being formed in the neighborhoods. . . ."¹⁰⁶

In this case Healy was presenting his American supporters with the official "line" of the International Committee. In August of the following year he undertook to go further and change the leadership of the Workers League. Wohlforth subsequently recounted the details of this incident.

A couple of weeks before a scheduled Workers League summer camp, Wohlforth was summoned to Britain to talk with Healy. There, Wohlforth was presented by Healy with a series of rumors with which expelled members of the WL had regaled him. Although Wohlforth thought that he had successfully confronted these reports, he was somewhat disconcerted to have been submitted to interrogation about them by Healy and others.

At the WL summer camp, which Healy and another British leader, Cliff Slaughter, attended, Healy indicated great preoccupation with "security measures" to assure his own safety. Then he accused Wohlforth of having "protected" his close associate Nancy Fields, whom Healy said he suspected of being a CIA agent. Using this as his

reason, Healy then proposed to a Workers League Central Committee meeting (held at the summer camp) that Wohlforth be removed as national secretary and be substituted for by Fred Mazelis. Both measures were adopted unanimously, with both Wohlforth and Fields voting in favor.

Subsequently the International Committee was called together to ratify the measures taken at the WL summer camp. Healy's intervention was endorsed, Wohlforth was barred from political leadership of the League, and Nancy Fields from "any contact with the League of any sort." Thereupon, Wohlforth resigned from the Workers League. When later he was invited to reapply for membership by the International Committee, Wohlforth refused to do so when informed that he would first have to "justify" himself before the International Committee. Fred Mazelis thereafter remained the principal leader of the Workers League.¹⁰⁷ However, by the early 1980s he had been succeeded by David North.

Subsequent History of the Workers League

The Workers League was still functioning in the middle 1980s. Its principal center of membership was in Michigan although in 1983 it also had local groups in Minneapolis, Chicago, and New York.¹⁰⁸

After Wohlforth's disappearance from its leadership, the Workers League shifted headquarters from New York City to Detroit. There it reestablished the Trade Union Alliance for a Labor Party, which it described as the "industrial arm" of the Workers League. Although there is no indication that the League or its Alliance gained any visible influence among the auto workers or any other organized labor group, the Alliance did organize at the end of July 1983 a National Conference of Workers and Unemployed. The call for this conference had as its concluding slogans: "Call of Congress of Labor! General Strike Against Reagan! Build

a Labor Party! Fight for a Workers' Government!"¹⁰⁹

The Young Socialists, the WL youth group, also continued to be active on some college campuses. In May 1984 it held its tenth national conference in Detroit, which featured a premiere showing of a film entitled "The Year of Karl Marx."¹¹⁰

The Workers League continued to argue in favor of establishment of a labor party. It published in 1980 a pamphlet entitled "The Case for a Labor Party."¹¹¹ One of the themes of the League's presidential election campaign in 1984 was "Build a Labor Party."¹¹²

During the 1984 campaign the Workers League named Ed Winn for president of the United States, and Helen Halyard for vice president. Both nominees were blacks. The party was on the ballot in six states—New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Minnesota.¹¹³ They also ran Fred Mazelis as candidate for the U.S. Senate in Michigan.¹¹⁴ Winn was officially credited with receiving 10,801 votes.¹¹⁵ In 1985 the WL named Helen Halyard once again as their candidate for mayor of Detroit.¹¹⁶

The Post-Wohlforth Workers League and Gerry Healy

The Workers League continued to be affiliated with the International Committee of the Fourth International, headed until late 1985 by Gerry Healy. The WL May Day proclamation of 1984 proclaimed the International Committee to be "the World Trotskyist movement, which alone represents the historical continuity of the struggle for Marxism and the traditions of the 1917 October Revolution which established the Soviet Union, the world's first workers state."¹¹⁷

The WL continued to follow the somewhat idiosyncratic policies of Healy and the International Committee. Among these was support for the Libyan regime of Mu'ammar Qaddafi. At the time of the shooting of a London police officer from inside the Libyan

"People's Bureau" (embassy) the Workers League newspaper reprinted an article from the publication of the Workers Revolutionary Party of Gerry Healy in Great Britain. That article started out, "The Tory government, the Home Office and the Metropolitan Police planned an elaborate conspiracy to invade the Libyan People's Bureau in St. James' Square last Tuesday to oust the supporters of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and install a bunch of right-wing pro-imperialist stooges."¹¹⁸

The Workers League also echoed Gerry Healy's vendetta against the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, particularly Joseph Hansen and George Novack, accusing them of having been GPU and FBI agents at the time Trotsky was living in Mexico and Hansen was among his bodyguards. Thus, the Workers League distributed a pamphlet, *The Confession of Sylvia Franklin*, with the subtitle *An SWP Coverup Exposed*.¹¹⁹

The association of the Workers League with Gerry Healy finally came to an end late in 1985. The break occurred when in October Healy was expelled from the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) of Great Britain by a majority of the WRP's Central Committee and from the International Committee of the Fourth International. In this split the Workers League sided with Healy's opponents, led by Cliff Slaughter and Mike Banda.

One of the political charges made against Healy by Banda and Slaughter was that he had accused David North, national secretary of the Workers League, of being a "CIA agent."¹²⁰ Soon afterward the WL's periodical *Bulletin* noted that "the IC statement explained that Healy's personal degeneration was inseparable from a protracted political degeneration. . . . This political degeneration provoked a struggle within the world Trotskyist movement, recorded in the documents which are now being made public."

The *Bulletin* released its own "documents." It revealed that "the Workers League raised political differences with the

Workers Revolutionary Party, first in 1982 on the question of Healy's philosophical views . . . and then in 1983-1984 on the political line of the WRP adopted under his leadership." However, *Bulletin* commented, "Healy and the Political Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party refused to discuss these criticisms on either occasion. The Workers League was compelled to withdraw the criticisms, without an answer being given, under threat that there would be an immediate breaking off of fraternal relations. . . ."¹²¹ As a consequence of these developments, when the split came in the ranks of the British Healyites the Workers League sided with Healy's opponents.

The Spark Group

During the factional fight within the Spartacist League in 1968, one element of the opposition was a group attracted by what was then called Voix Ouvrière, and after 1968 Lutte Ouvrière, in France. They were particularly favorably impressed with that French Trotskyist group's strategy of regular preparation and distribution of leaflets directed specifically at workers in different factories and other places of employment.

By 1971 this element had formally organized as The Spark. At that time it had small groups in Baltimore and Detroit. They issued a kind of statement of principles entitled "For a Trotskyist Organization in the Working Class." This document repeated the usual Trotskyist analysis of the rise of the "bureaucracy" in the Soviet Union and the consequent degeneration of the Soviet regime and the Comintern. They then went on to observe "The Failure of the Fourth International." The document stated that "we believe that the failures of the Trotskyist organizations come from their passive adaptation to external conditions and particularly to their own original milieu. . . . Work in the petty-bourgeois arenas, which they formerly accepted as a necessity, they now proclaim to be a virtue. They pretend that

students, petty-bourgeois intellectuals, and nationalist leaders are the vanguard which by its action will catalyze the working class into revolutionary consciousness."

The Spark statement then defined the group's own orientation. It said that "the organization must bring together militants from the working class and militants of petty-bourgeois origin who have broken with their class, but it must guard itself against ever becoming an expression of the petty-bourgeois layers of society. . . . Therefore, all members of the petty-bourgeois origin must prove their ability to recruit and develop worker militants. If a petty-bourgeois militant is unable to devote the major part of his activity to this aim, or is ineffective in this work, he should be removed from all decision-making within the organization."

The declaration ended, "We consider ourselves part of the Trotskyist movement. But for all the above reasons, we have decided to be politically active independent from these existing organizations."¹²²

The Spark group began in July 1971 to publish a monthly newspaper, *Spark*. By early 1976 this had become a biweekly. The announcement in *Spark* of this change noted that "when we began *Spark* we had only 3 newsletters. Today we have twelve. Our newsletters appear in auto, steel, telephone, electrical, and textile factories in Baltimore and Detroit. Our newsletters enable us to organize workers around our ideas and to get our ideas into the hands of thousands of workers. . . . Alternating our biweekly paper with our biweekly newsletters means that now we can appear every week at the factories to give the views of Spark on the issues that face us."¹²³

The newsletters were directed at workers in specific workplaces and dealt both with the immediate problems of those workers and with the more general ideas of the Spark group. For instance, the "Ford Spark" newsletter of January 24, 1978, issued for a Ford motor plant in Detroit, had a lead article entitled "Workers Have the Right to Stop

Nazis," arguing in favor of measures to close a Nazi bookstore near the plant. It also had a notice of a showing of a movie, "Black Legion," about a fascist-type organization of the 1930s. The newsletter also had short notes about the failure of the company to clean snow out of its parking lots, the fact that no new workers had been employed as had been promised when a new Personnel Holiday Plan had been introduced, the company's not giving workers advance notice of when they would have overtime, and about the Ford Company in South Africa. Finally, it had a short article on the arrest of seven participants in a wildcat strike at the Trenton Engine Plant of the Chrysler Corporation.¹²⁴

Another newsletter, issued for workers of a Chrysler plant, "Eldon Spark," in its June 30, 1977 number, had a lead article on the front page condemning an incident in which white high school graduates had celebrated their commencement by going into a black area and beating up several people. It argued that "for white workers, there is a choice." Other notes in the newsletter dealt with the union's failure to inform new workers of their rights, overtime problems, the "squeeze on older workers," and a cartoon showing a doctor being interviewed by the Chrysler Medical Hiring Board and being told that "We don't care how many degrees you have, doctor. How's your killer instinct?"¹²⁵

In addition to their newspaper and newsletters the Spark Group began in 1980 to publish a mimeographed magazine, *Class Struggle*, subtitled, "A Trotskyist Quarterly." It carried longer articles reflecting the group's points of view. One in the second issue on the anti-nuclear movement commented that "certainly today revolutionaries should support the anti-nuclear movement morally and politically. They should participate in its activities when such participation will not detract from their basic activity in the working class. But we must be clear that the building of a revolutionary

organization rooted in the working class comes before participation in any petty-bourgeois movement."¹²⁶

Class Struggle indicated the Spark group's support for the Polish Solidarity movement. The October 1981 issue had an article on "Poland: What Lies Ahead for the Working Class?" commenting on the first (and only) congress of Solidarity. It commented that "the very existence of the Congress . . . demonstrated the democratic rights which the Polish workers had taken for themselves in this period. That the workers have sustained their organization so long and continued to extend their demands without falling back is remarkable."¹²⁷

Subsequent to the suppression of Solidarity, *Class Struggle* carried an article on that event, which concluded that "As long as the enemies of the working class hold the power, that is, as long as they control the state apparatus and the army, the working class has no way to guarantee it can retain what it won by its struggles. . . . That is, the working class must fight for the one thing, for power, which is the guarantee that it can keep all the other things it has won."¹²⁸

The position of the Spark Group on the (for Trotskyists) all-important issue of the nature of the Soviet Union was markedly different from that of virtually all other U.S. Trotskyist groups but similar to that of its French counterpart. They held that, since the Soviet Union was the only country which had had a genuine workers revolution in which the workers had seized control, it was the only case which could be labelled a degenerated workers state.¹²⁹ As for the other Communist Party-controlled regimes, an editorial in *Spark* defined the situation by saying, "The workers were not involved in establishing these states, and these states do not represent the working class. Romania, like the rest of East Europe, is simply a bourgeois state, with a poorly developed economy. . . ."¹³⁰

By mid-1982 the Spark Group had local units in Detroit, Chicago, and Baltimore and

had recently established one in New York City. Internationally it was associated with the Lutte Ouvrière party in France.¹³¹

The Turner Group

The principal element in the opposition within the Spartacist League in the factional struggle of 1968 was led by Harry Turner. They left the SL at the end of that year. Upon leaving the Spartacist League the Turner group explored the possibility of joining forces with one or another of the other groups claiming loyalty to Trotskyism. They first negotiated with the Workers League but were unable to reach agreement on a number of political points. They then joined forces with the SDS-Labor Committee, headed by Lyn Marcus (Lyndon LaRouche), which was then an open organization grouping together several different Trotskyist tendencies. However, after a short period they followed the Spartacist League and Workers League in withdrawing from the Marcus group. Shortly thereafter they established the *Vanguard Newsletter* (VNL).¹³²

In an early issue of the *Vanguard Newsletter* the group synthesized its political position. This statement said that "we in *Vanguard Newsletter* call for the building of an American section of the international Leninist and Trotskyist working class vanguard party on a program to unite the racially divided working class in struggle against all forms of special oppression, in its own immediate and fundamental interests and for the socialist revolution." The statement continued: "We call for the organization of rank and file or left-wing caucuses in the trade unions with this perspective incorporated into a comprehensive program of transitional demands. We believe that a network of such caucuses can develop into a leadership of the organized working class, can become at a revolutionary moment, workers' councils, 'Soviets', organs of 'dual

power' and the 'dictatorship of the proletariat.'" ¹³³

The VNL group continued to be interested in merging with other groups. It had further discussions with the Workers League.¹³⁴ It also kept close track of a split then in progress within the De Leonist Socialist Labor Party. The SLP dissidents formed a new group, Socialist Reconstruction, in August 1970, and that group expelled some of its own dissidents, who established the Socialist Forum Group. The VNL said of it, that "in uniting De Leon's contributions to revolutionary Marxism with those of Lenin and Trotsky, Socialist Forum has developed a program which is close to that of *Vanguard Newsletter* on most essential questions."¹³⁵ The two groups did not unite, however.

In 1972 there was a small split in the Socialist Workers Party. The Leninist Faction withdrew and established the Class Struggle League (CSL). The VNL immediately made contact with the CSL, which was already negotiating with the Spartacist League. The VNL proposed a discussion of programmatic issues and possible unity among the three groups. The Spartacists rejected further negotiations, and the VNL and CSL agreed on unification under the Class Struggle League name.¹³⁶

The founding convention of the new Class Struggle League evidenced two basic issues on which there was disagreement. One was whether it was possible to salvage the Fourth International or whether it was necessary to form an entirely new Fifth International. The latter view gained a majority. The second issue of disagreement was whether the East European regimes were workers states. On that subject, "The majority held that the buffer states became workers states when the Red Army, representing the proletarian state in a distorted form, consolidated state power in these countries."

There had also been some controversy over trade union policy. However, agreement was reached that "the new organization will do work in the trade unions by

recruiting to revolutionary socialism, selling its newspaper and pamphlets, and helping to build rank and file caucuses that will lead the working class. . . . The new organization, while it propagandizes for a national, network of rank and file caucuses, does not attempt to build a national committee of such caucuses now, when there is no base for it."¹³⁷

The United Class Struggle League lasted only about two years. Harry Turner and his followers soon found themselves in the minority in the leadership of the League. The split finally came in May 1975. It was thus described by the Turner faction: "Our organization is the culmination of the internal struggle between a centrist wing, organized around the Central Committee (CC), and its revolutionary Marxist wing, organized around the Bolshevik Faction, which took place at the third national convention of the Class Struggle League (CSL). On the last day of the convention, more than half the membership resigned from the CSL to form the Trotskyist Organizing Committee. . . ."¹³⁸

Once again the Turnerrites, now the Trotskyist Organizing Committee (TOC), which had about thirty members in New York, Chicago, Texas, and San Francisco, made overtures to other Trotskyist groups. It sought agreement on five points: the counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism, an international of revolutionary Marxism (the Fourth International), the validity of the Transitional Program, a national rank-and-file organization in the trade unions, and a labor party based on the trade unions independent of the capitalist parties.

The TOC made contacts with the Socialist Workers Party, promising to conform to SWP discipline if it was possible for it to present its point of view three months before conventions. The SWP turned down these overtures. Among the other tendencies with which the TOC negotiated were the Thornett group in the United States, the Socialist League (Democratic Centralist) and the Spark group.

U.S. Trotskyism: Other U.S. Trotskyist and Ex-Trotskyist Groups

Finally, in 1978 the TOC was invited by Mike Bartell of Los Angeles to become part of the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party, an umbrella group of several smaller organizations.¹³⁹ As a consequence, on November 16, 1978 a statement by TOC under the masthead of the TOC periodical *Socialist Appeal* announced that "as a result of these discussions and attendance at the first national CRSP conference of an observer, we in the TOC have decided to join CRSP. We have, therefore, dissolved the TOC and ended the publication of *Socialist Appeal*. . . ."¹⁴⁰

Soon after the TOC joined the CRSP the latter decided to become a separate political organization, rather than a "united front." As a consequence, the TOC once more withdrew. The TOC also became the Revolutionary Unity League (RUL).

The RUL once again entered into negotiations with another group in 1981. In this case, it was the Revolutionary Workers Front (RWF), the United States affiliate of the faction of the Fourth International headed by the Argentine, Nahuel Moreno. The two groups merged at a convention in July 1982 to establish the Internationalist Workers Party (Fourth International),¹⁴¹ which is discussed in the following chapter.

In addition to the Socialist Workers Party and its dissidents of the 1982–84 period, Shachtmanite offshoots, the Workers World Party, Spartacists, and Workers League and their splinters, there have been several other groups in the United States since the 1960s professing loyalty to Trotskyism. Some of these have had association with one or another faction of the Fourth International. Most remained more or less Trotskyists, at least in their own view, although one of them carried out a strange evolution from the far left to the extreme right.

The News and Letters Group

The oldest of these dissident groups was the News and Letters Group, established in 1955. It had its roots in an old faction within the U.S. Trotskyist movement, the Johnson-Forest Tendency. Its principal leader was Raya Dunayevskaya.

In her earlier incarnation, Raya Dunayevskaya was known as Rae Spiegel, and under her "party name," F. Forest. For a while during Trotsky's residence in Mexico she had been one of his secretaries. She subsequently described her assignments with him as being "work on behalf of the Russian Bulletin of the Left Opposition," and "some research work regarding Stalin."¹

Both C. L. R. James (Johnson) and Rae Spiegel (Forest) had left the Socialist Workers Party with the Shachtmanites. However, by 1941 they had formed the "state capitalist" tendency within the Workers Party (WP), the group which disagreed with Max Shachtman's description of the Soviet Union as being "bureaucratic collectivist."² In 1945 they became officially known as the

"Johnson-Forest Tendency" within the wp. They finally split from the Workers Party in the summer of 1947.³

The Johnson-Forest Tendency remained outside of any group for a few weeks and then reentered the Socialist Workers Party. Within the swp as had been the case in the Workers Party they constituted a "state capitalist" faction. In that capacity they contributed a number of polemical articles to the *Internal Bulletin* of the swp.⁴

At the time the Johnson-Forest Tendency reentered the Socialist Workers Party the swp was engaged in a reassessment of their attitude on "the Negro question," and so particularly welcomed the return of C. L. R. James. He delivered the report on that issue to the swp convention following his readmission.⁵

The Johnson-Forest Tendency left the Socialist Workers Party once again in August 1951.⁶ By that time, as Kent Worcester has noted, "The tendency had broken with Trotskyism on almost every point."⁷ In October 1951 the Johnson-Forest Tendency established a new periodical as the rallying point for their ideas and organization, *Correspondence*.⁸ There were about seventy members of the group at that point.⁹ Seven issues of the periodical appeared, the last one in March 1953.¹⁰ Meanwhile, in November 1952 C. L. R. James had been arrested. He was held at Ellis Island for six months and then was expelled from the country.¹¹ With his departure, the Johnson-Forest Tendency, as such, came to an end.

News and Letters Committees [sic], under Raya Dunayevskaya's leadership, was formally established in 1955. A later statement of the organization on "Who We Are and What We Stand For" noted that "*News and Letters* was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice which was itself a form of theory. Vol I, no. 1, came off the press on the second anniversary of the June

17, 1953, East German revolt against Russian state-capitalism masquerading as Communism, in order to express our solidarity with freedom fighters abroad as well as at home. Because 1953 was also the year when we worked out the revolutionary dialectics of Marxism in its original form of 'New Humanism,' as well as individuality (purified of all that interferes with universalism, i.e., with freedom itself), we organized ourselves in Committees rather than any elitist party 'to lead.'"¹²

The form of organization of the News and Letters Committees has been unique for a Marxist revolutionary organization. As Andy Phillips commented in *News and Letters* early in 1980, "The form is a decentralized committee structure of freely associated local groups and individuals acting through and with a centralized National Editorial Board responsible for implementing decisions determined in the process of free and open discussions at annual plenary sessions and conventions. . . . We chose the committee form of organization because it permitted the greatest flexibility and did not preclude any future organizational development. We are not opposed to the political party form on principle: we are opposed to the concept of the vanguard party to lead the masses and the practice that flows from that."¹³

Each successive annual conference of the group drew up its interpretation of the current scene and its program for activities during the coming year. All these statements were presumably prepared, debated and accepted in the context of the Marxist Humanism developed by Raya Dunayevskaya.

The Draft Perspectives Thesis prepared for the 1980 annual meeting of the group noted that "first and most important, of course, is the expansion of *News and Letters* into a twelve-pager, which at one and the same time calls for the creation of a nucleus to write theoretical analyses of burning issues as they happen, and a forum for workers, Blacks, women and youth to speak for

themselves." The document went on to say that "naturally this means expansion of all our activities, especially with the *unemployed*; especially with the youth in its fight against the proposed registration for the draft; especially with the *Black masses* as a whole, who are the greatest victims of the present recession and who have already demonstrated their passion for revolt and totally new human relations; and especially with the *Women's Liberationists*, internationally as well as nationally, who have not only deepened and expanded their activities but are everywhere also involved in the most serious theoretical reconsideration."¹⁴

In spite of the implications of this 1980 document that the News and Letters Group and its members were carrying on organized political activities in several different fields, most of the attention and efforts of the group appear over the years to have been concentrated on issuing and circulating the newspaper *News and Letters* together with a variety of pamphlets and books issued by the organization. Key to all of this was the propagation of the Marxist Humanist ideas of Raya Dunayevskaya.

News and Letters is the particular pride and vehicle of the organization. The previously cited statement on "Who We Are and What We Stand For" commented that "*News and Letters* was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard not separated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. A black production worker, Charles Denby, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, is the editor of the paper."¹⁵

Charles Denby (Mathew Ward) was associated with Raya Dunayevskaya from the late 1940s.¹⁶ He was an auto worker, participated in various insurgent movements against the Reuther regime in the United Auto Workers, and was for several years a member of the Socialist Workers Party. In his autobiography he commented that "I was never happier at any time in my life than when I left the Trotskyist Party."¹⁷

There is no doubt about the fact that the News and Letters Group centered on Raya Dunayevskaya and her ideas. Charles Denby called her book *Philosophy and Revolution* "the most fundamental statement of Marxist Humanism."¹⁸ Lou Turner, of the group, has commented that "I think that all understanding of what is meant by Marx's Humanism turns on comprehending Dunayevskaya's contribution to Marxist philosophy with *PeR*."¹⁹

The position of Dunayevskaya as the axis of the News and Letters Group was clear in the Draft Prospectives Thesis prepared for the 1980 convention of the group. It commented that "from the vantage point both of the objective situation and of the need to assure a new stage of organizational development, we need to bring the Archives of Marxist-Humanism up to date, with the completion of the draft of the book, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. There is not a single problem today which is not illuminated by that study. . . ."²⁰ The archives referred to were those of Raya Dunayevskaya in the Wayne State University Library.

Early in 1968 there was an effort made to establish a youth section of the News and Letters Group. Eugene Walker, commenting on this attempt, said that "the challenge of trying to establish a Marxist-Humanist youth group to aid in this is a hard, serious one. A first step is to break with the distortions, slanders and slogans which either vilify or pass for Marxism. . . . Theirs must be the task of infusing the pluri-dimensionality of Marxism into a Movement whose possibility for fulfillment resides in breaking out of its pragmatic mold into a fully conscious human activity for full freedom." A group of students, including high schoolers, began publishing a periodical, *The Young Marxist-Humanist*, which included a greeting entitled "The Heritage and the Challenge" by Raya Dunayevskaya.²¹ However, there is no indication that a News and

Letters youth group was actually established.

The News and Letters Group was not associated with any of the international Trotskyist tendencies. It is clear that it was no longer Trotskyist in spite of its origins. Rather, it was a group organized around the ideas of Raya Dunayevskaya, based supposedly on the early philosophical writings of Marx, and some of those of Lenin.²²

Lou Turner has commented that "we have not had any splits in News and Letters, nor have we merged with any other group or tendency. Internationally, we continue to develop relationships with revolutionaries who have broken with all state powers, from Mao's China to Castro's Cuba. There has developed a British Marxist-Humanist group which will be issuing its own British supplement to go with *NeOL* this year."²³

The Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party

The Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP,) which held its first national conference in October 1978, had its origins in several groups which had broken from the Socialist Workers Party over the previous fifteen years or more. These included the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP), based in Seattle, Washington, the Socialist Union in California, and a group around Murry and Myra Tanner Weiss in New York City.

The Freedom Socialist Party originated principally with the Seattle branch of the SWP, which split with the national organization in May 1966, and a few weeks later, together with a few people who had not belonged to the Socialist Workers Party, met to establish the FSP. Its principal divergences from the then current SWP position were over: "(1) Revolutionary Integration as the direction of the black liberation struggle. Blacks in the U.S. cannot end their special oppression by turning in a nationalist separatist direction, and in the course of fighting for their rights will most likely take their

rightful place as the vanguard detachment of a working-class socialist revolution. (2) The first-rank importance of women's rights, in both theory and practice, within the party, the mass movements, and on the general political scene."²⁴ Subsequently the Freedom Socialist Party as well as the CRSP continued to put great emphasis on "socialist feminism."

The FSP held its first Conference in January 1967. At that time the party established a somewhat peculiar form of organization, and certain factional differences appeared within its leadership. It elected both an Executive Committee and a Literary and Correspondence Committee. The former was controlled by Clara Fraser, the Literary and Correspondence Committee by a Mr. Kirk, who had been a member of the SWP National Committee, and Frank Krasnowsky. A dispute arose as to which of these two organizations was the highest authority within the new party.²⁵ After considerable struggle the Frazer group won control of the FSP, an event which was hailed by the winners as "A Victory for Socialist Feminism."²⁶

The Freedom Socialist Party continued to be largely under the influence of Clara Fraser. In 1968 she organized Radical Women, a radical feminist group. She won considerable attention in the late 1970s as the result of a suit she brought against the Seattle City Light Company, which had dismissed her as education coordinator in charge of a special program for training women and minorities for jobs in the enterprise.²⁷

The Socialist Union was organized by Milton Zaslow (Mike Bartell), who had first left the Socialist Workers Party with the Shachtmanites in 1940 but subsequently had returned to the SWP. By the early 1950s he was organizer of the SWP Local in New York, and in that capacity sided with the Cochranites at the time of their split with the SWP. After the Cochranites' expulsion he had a small group of his own until 1955, when he retired from active radical politics for a number of years.

In 1969 Zaslow organized a group in Los Angeles, where he had moved, which finally took the name Liberation Union. Then, in the early 1970s, when the Internationalist Tendency was expelled from the SWP, he joined forces with some of them to organize the Socialist Union.

The third group of SWP dissidents which joined to establish the CRSP was centered on Murry and Myra Tanner Weiss in New York City. Murry Weiss had for long been a major figure in the Cannon faction in the SWP, and Myra Tanner Weiss had also been a top figure in the party, and its candidate for vice president of the United States in the 1950s. They had been disillusioned in the "single issue" turn of the SWP in the 1960s, and with the SWP leadership's impatience with any organized criticism of its position. Myra Tanner Weiss had cast the only vote in the Political Committee against expulsion of the group around James Robertson who were subsequently to form the Spartacist League. The Weisses had dropped out of the SWP but apparently until the late 1970s had not belonged to any other group.

The Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party was first conceived of as an organization to group together elements outside of the Socialist Workers Party who still considered themselves Trotskyists and had positions opposed to the supposed "opportunism" of the SWP. It was not itself originally intended to become a democratic centrist Trotskyist party.²⁸

The CRSP had its First National Conference in Union, Washington, from October 6 to 9, 1978. There were reported to be one-hundred people in attendance, including members and fraternal representatives. The meeting adopted two resolutions which they regarded as "crucial." One was "Theses on the Crisis of the Fourth International," and the other "National Tasks and Perspectives for CRSP."²⁹

The document on the Fourth International was oriented towards the United Secretariat and seemed designed to appeal to

the European leaders of USEC to break with the Socialist Workers Party and to accept the elements grouped in the CRSP as a truer representative of Trotskyism in the United States. An official report of the conference said that "the SWP is criticized in the *Theses* for its 'implacable hostility' to the burgeoning women's caucuses within the Fourth International, and the International is asked to 'struggle against two fatal afflictions of the SWP-USA: Stalinophobia and Sexophobia,' which, along with bureaucratism, have occasioned a catastrophic shift to the right within the organization. The International is further warned that its 'sweetheart agreement' with the SWP on the 'turn to the proletariat' is fraught with danger for world Trotskyism."

The conference also adapted a reply to a letter from USEC refusing the CRSP request to participate in discussions preparing for the next World Congress of the United Secretariat. It called this letter a "high-handed ukase," and added that "you have deepened your policy of pursuing an unprincipled bloc with the SWP at the expense of the principles of Trotskyism."³⁰

The other document, on National Tasks and Perspectives, was adopted unanimously and "opens by reaffirming commitment to the liberation struggles of workers, women, racial-ethnic minorities, and gay people, and to the promotion of workers democracy in every sector of social and political struggle. And it hails the upsurge of socialist feminism throughout the world as a thunderous component of global revolution."

The resolution was orthodoxly Trotskyist in proclaiming that "the proletariat is the central force in the overthrow of capitalism," but somewhat less orthodox in adding that "we anticipate that in the U.S. the vanguard of the proletariat will be composed in its majority of women, oppressed racial and national minorities, and gay people."

The document reiterated the old Trotskyist call for a labor party. It also asserted that "privileged layers within the working class,

and . . . skilled-trades insularity breed reactionary habits and practices that deepen the gulf between the privileged and more oppressed workers, and thereby dissipate class independence and worker solidarity against management." Therefore, it called on all CRSP trade unionists to support "the most oppressed layers of the working class—women, minorities, gays, radicals, undocumented workers, etc."

The Tasks and Perspectives resolution seemed to emphasize the role of the CRSP as a kind of Trotskyist united front. The official report on it noted that the document concludes with an invitation to other radical groupings and individuals to join CRSP and participate in the construction of the world party of socialist revolution and 'victorious worker internationalism.'³¹ It was announced at the meeting that the Trotskyist Organizing Committee (TOC—the Turn-erites) had decided to affiliate with the CRSP and that Earl Owens was there representing the TOC.³²

With the split in the United Secretariat in 1979 and the establishment of the Parity Committee for the Reorganization (Reconstruction) of the Fourth International by the USEC faction headed by Nahuel Moreno, and by the Lambertists, the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party sought alignment with this new Parity Committee. Murry Weiss wrote a letter as CRSP National Coordinator to the Parity Committee "with the aim of reaching a close collaboration and systematic correspondence in the struggle against the opportunism and bureaucratic monolithism within the Fourth International."

The Murry Weiss letter outlined the positions of the CRSP at the time. It expressed sympathy for the stands that the Moreno faction had taken, particularly on the revolution in Nicaragua. Weiss also commented that "The 'unity' of USEC with the SWP under the demagogic slogan of proletarianization, has not been consummated because of the absence of principled differences. In fact, the political schism is widening." Insofar as the

SWP was concerned, Weiss wrote that "The SWP-USA has lost its corrective power for learning from mistakes by eliminating the full play of party democracy . . . bureaucratic norms prevail in the SWP-USA. The SWP-USA must not triumph in the International."³³

Over the July 4, 1980 holiday, the CRSP held a Seattle meeting of the plenum of its Steering Committee on the theme of "Faction Struggle, Reconstruction, and New Horizons." The three-day meeting dealt with internal struggles within the CRSP, various world crisis areas, "The Split in the 4th International," and "The American Question," among other matters. It was also there that its program for reorganizing as a disciplined party instead of a loose coalition of groups, was apparently adopted.³⁴

There was considerable opposition within the CRSP to converting it into a single democratic centralist group. Harry Turner has observed that after that decision, his group, the Trotskyist Organizing Committee, as well as the Socialist Union and Myra Tanner Weiss, declared the CRSP to have been dissolved, and went their separate ways. Murry Weiss, who had joined the Freedom Socialist Party, remained with the CRSP.³⁵

The Internationalist Workers' Party (Fourth International)

One of the most recent Trotskyist groups to be established in the United States is the Internationalist Workers' Party (Fourth International). It also has the distinction of being perhaps the only U.S. Trotskyist organization drawing its leadership and membership principally from people of Latin American origin. As such, it became the United States affiliate of the faction of International Trotskyism led by the Argentine Nahuel Moreno, the head of the International Workers' League (Fourth International).

Leon Pérez, the national organizer of the IWP(4I), has described the origins of its predecessor, the Revolutionary Workers Front-Frente Revolucionario de los Trabajadores.

He wrote in 1982 that "our organization was founded by two comrades of the International in March 1980. Shortly after that a group of militants in exile belonging to the Nicaraguan FSLN joined them. Some individual members of the SWP also joined. . . . The rest of the militants and sympathizers in our organization were won over through general political work with independent workers. We presently have about 120 members in seven cities of the U.S. . . . Our work is primarily among workers and minorities groups in the U.S. (Latinos and Blacks). We sell 2500 copies of each issue of *El Bolchevique* and 1300 copies of each issue of *Working Class Opposition*. We have already built fractions in ten different unions."³⁶

In 1982 the Revolutionary Workers Front merged with the tendency led by Harry Turner, at that time called the Revolutionary Unity League, to form the Internationalist Workers' Party (Fourth International). This merger came about largely as a result of international contacts.

When the split in the United Secretariat occurred in 1979 over attitudes towards the Nicaraguan Revolution, and the faction led by Nahuel Moreno formed a Parity Committee with the Lambertist tendency, Harry Turner's Revolutionary Unity League sought to affiliate with that committee. A Lambertist representative met with them in New York, but refused association of them with the Committee when Harry Turner raised an issue of disagreement with the Lambertist attitude a decade earlier towards the Bolivian Trotskyist group led by Guillermo Lora.³⁷

When the Moreno and Lambertist forces split once again, and the Moreno tendency held a world congress to organize its faction in January 1982, the Revolutionary Unity League of the United States sent a delegate to that meeting. So did the Revolutionary Workers Front, which owed its origins to the breakaway of the Moreno forces from the United Secretariat.

Partly as a consequence of the intervention of the international group, "a national

leadership team was set up to coordinate the editing and distribution of *El Bolchevique* and *Working Class Opposition* and plan joint participation in demonstrations, strikes and political campaigns around Poland, El Salvador, Central America, etc." The two groups also discussed political issues between them, as a result of which "the political differences which had existed between the two groups were notably reduced." As a consequence, joint documents were elaborated for submission to a unification convention.³⁸

The convention met on June 26-27, 1982. Out of it came the Internationalist Workers Party (Fourth International).³⁹ The convention ratified affiliation of the group with the International Workers League (Fourth International), and adopted a Draft Political Resolution defining the new party's political position. It also elected a nine-member Central Committee: Harry Turner, Leon Pérez, Susana Fernández, Roberto Cárdenas, Loretta Syllis, Carol Williams, Anna Gómez, Rolando Córdoba, Marc Elliot, and an alternate member, Federico De Leon. A Control Commission made up of Susana Fernández, Numa Alvarez, and Sonia Morales was also elected.

At its first meeting the Central Committee named a Political Bureau consisting of Harry Turner, Leon Pérez, and Anna Gómez. Leon Pérez was chosen as national organizer.⁴⁰

The founding convention of the IWP(FI) adopted a Political Resolution which ran to seventy-five pages. It defined the new party as "an action oriented propaganda group." It called for establishment of a labor party and provided that "the IWP(FI) would participate in a movement for the formation of a Labor Party but maintain its own program, publications and fight to transform it into a truly revolutionary party."

The Political Resolution emphasized that "the immediate task of any organization which calls itself revolutionary is to work among the Black masses in the U.S. since they are one of the most potentially revolu-

tionary groups in our society." It promised "to fight against chauvinism and racism in all its manifestations within the U.S. working class. . . ." It also contained "a reaffirmation of the political line of the IWP(FI) which considers immigrant workers as an integral part of the U.S. working class and its struggles."

The Political Resoulution proclaimed that "true women's liberation will only be achieved in a society where collective work frees women from the slavery of housework. In other words, only in a Socialist society will women achieve that liberation." It also provided "as a sub-item on the woman's question . . . the defense of democratic rights for gays, including the right to maintain their own lifestyles and sexual relations." The document provided for the new Central Committee "to prepare new chapters of this document about youth, our characterization and political orientation toward other left forces and our electoral activities."⁴¹

The founding congress of the IWP(FI) also adopted the statutes of the new organization. It was noted that "several sources were drawn upon in preparing the proposed statutes for the new unified organization: The previous statutes of the RWO-FRT, parts of the RUL's statutes and the statutes of the International Workers League (FI), adapting the proposed national statutes as much as possible to the international definitions."

This constitution provided that "the Central Committee will guarantee by all possible means the right of tendencies and factions to express themselves and to reach party comrades with their positions." However, such factions or tendencies were to be only for periods of pre-Convention discussion and only if formed "around political documents published by the Central Committee or Political Bureau. Tendencies or factions must submit notification in writing to the Central Committee or the Political Bureau that they will respect and observe democratic centralism and that they agree

to respect all and each part of the Statutes."⁴²

The IWP(FI) continued to have its major base in California, particularly among Spanish-speaking workers there. In 1983-84 it opened three headquarters, in Los Angeles, San José, and San Francisco. At its Fourth Regular Congress in July 1984 there were present "delegates, special guests and observers . . . from New York, Philadelphia, Wisconsin, Minneapolis, St. Louis, Chicago, San José, Oakland, San Francisco, Long Beach, Santa Ana and Los Angeles."⁴³

Much of the organization's effort centered on putting out and distributing two newspapers, *Working Class Opposition* and *El Bolchevique*. They regularly carried news not only about the organization but about strikes and other labor situations, and considerable international news, with particular emphasis on events in Central America. By August 1984 the party claimed a combined circulation for the two papers of 12,000.⁴⁴

In at least two situations IWP(FI) members were active in trade unions. These were in the civil servants' unions in New York City and the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union in San Francisco.⁴⁵

Electoral action was centered particularly on the Peace and Freedom Party (PFP), a legally recognized organization in California. In PFP primaries in 1984 they backed three successful candidates. These were Sonia Cruz, a Salvadorean immigrant who ran for the state senate from a Los Angeles district; James Green, who was nominated for Congress from the 24th District, also in Los Angeles; and John O'Brien, running for the state assembly from the Hollywood area.⁴⁶ On a national level, the party was "urging you to cast your ballot against the Democrats and Republicans and for those parties and candidates who consider themselves to be socialists and part of the working class. . . . In those states where the SWP, the WWP and the CP candidates are running against each other, we urge you to support the So-

cialist Workers Party, the Workers World Party and the Communist Party in that order."⁴⁷

The Internationalist Workers Party devoted some attention to trying to bring together many of the groups and factions in the United States professing loyalty to Trotskyism. In June 1983 it organized in Los Angeles an Emergency National Trotskyist Conference.⁴⁸ Nothing concrete emerged from that meeting. However, a year later the party began working on a second national Trotskyist conference and was having an exchange of correspondence with the Revolutionary Workers League looking toward possible unification of the two groups.⁴⁹

Some reflection of the composition of the rwp(fi) is seen in the new Central Committee elected at its 1984 congress: "Among the eighteen members elected from a list of twenty-one nominees there are eight Latinos, one Black, and nine white workers. Seven members are women, and eleven are men. All Central Committee members are workers. Seven are active union members. There is even a balance in the age span of the comrades elected. Among the members and alternates one is less than twenty, seven are between twenty and thirty, another seven are between thirty and forty and three comrades are over fifty-five."⁵⁰

In July 1984 a severe factional struggle began in the Internationalist Workers Party (Fourth International). Neither side published details of the major issues at stake in the conflict. After unsuccessful efforts by the International Workers' League (Fourth International) to bring together the two factions of its U.S. adherents, the rwl(fi) International Executive Committee decided to continue to recognize the Internationalist Workers Party as its United States section and to recognize the dissident minority group as a "sympathizing section."⁵¹

The dissidents established the Internationalist Socialist League (Fourth International), which in November 1985 began publication of a monthly newspaper, *Workers'*

Organizer. Among those issuing the newspaper were Harry Turner, Susana Fernández, and Carol Williams of the original rwp(fi) Central Committee. The paper indicated that the new League had branches in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, and Wisconsin.⁵²

The Revolutionary Communist League (Internationalist)

The Revolutionary Communist League (Internationalist), or rcl(i), had its origins in the Workers World Party, Spartacist League, and the New Left of the 1960s. The positions it assumed on various issues showed evidence of all these sources.

One of the leaders of the group, I. Mohareb, has written that "we trace our distinct ideological origins to the little-known 'Global Class War' tendency in the Socialist Workers Party, which formed around the oppositionist work of Sam Marcy and Vince Copeland between 1950 and 1959. The tendency left the swp in 1959 to form the Workers World Party."⁵³

However, although the "ideological origins" of the rcl(i) may have come from the group which formed the wwp, organizationally the group began as a split from the Spartacist League in 1968. Bob Ross, one of the founders of the rcl(i), has written that "several of us despaired of the sl's consistent record of inactivity and left to form the first rcl, oriented initially largely toward an activist perspective in collaboration with both yawf Workers World and 'New Left' elements in what was then called the Coalition for an Anti-Imperialist Movement (co-aim). Most of us were veterans of the sl's abortive participation in the 'Revolutionary Contingent' the previous year, as well as some of the sl's earliest trade union work."⁵⁴

The first Revolutionary Communist League set forth its program in "A Call to Action: Founding Principles of the Revolutionary Communist League." This document reflected both Trotskyist and New

Left origins. On the one hand it stressed "The Unity of Theory and Practice," saying that "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice." It also stressed "equally, the entire body of Marxist thought upon which Leninism was built, and the monumental contributions of Leon Trotsky which alone permit a solid understanding of the historical degeneration of the Soviet State. . . ."

In conformity with orthodox Trotskyist ideas, the "Call to Action" called for "Unconditional Defense of the Workers' States." In elaboration on this point, it said, "While appreciating the cataclysmic degeneration both of the Soviet state and of allied, defeated regimes from Budapest to Peking and Hanoi, and while recognizing above all the despicably traitorous role played by international Stalinism in all its varieties within the world workers' movement, we still retain a central conception of the resolute defense of the workers' states against imperialism as an essential component of the world revolution."

Finally, the RCL document was orthodoxly Trotskyist in advocating "Truly DEMOCRATIC Centralism." This section argued that "the disciplined Vanguard Party is a vital prerequisite of the Revolution. . . . But Centralism loses its sense of direction, and the Revolution its very sense of purpose, when DEMOCRATIC centralism is replaced by the Centralism of a complacent bureaucratic 'regime'. . . ."

However, on at least two points the RCL "Call to Action" was distinctly New Leftist. Under the head of "The Rising Tide of Reaction," the call argued that "as the final stones are laid for the legal and military foundations of authoritarian rule, we sound the call both for increased vigilance and for *militant self defense*. Not merely in word, nor alone in encouragement to others, but in our own personal lives, revolutionists must reject both the concept of police-state 'gun control' legislation, and any idea of obeying such laws, raising instead the banner of

ARMED SELF-DEFENSE against paramilitary authoritarian forces, 'official' or otherwise."

The second New Left element of the original RCL statement of principles was its position "Against Electoral Frauds—For Mass Action," which stated that "for the foreseeable future . . . we reject the very concept of such activity. . . . Elections *as such* are a swamp into which talents and energies are drained away from the areas of mass struggle where a revolutionary movement can be and is being built." It did not rule out completely the ultimate idea of a labor party, but was for one "only if based on truly independent workers' movement . . . without illusions about electoral 'victory' and 'constitutional democracy.'" ⁵⁵

Late in 1968 the RCL merged into the Workers World Party, "taking with us into that Party the first openly Trotskyist positions and literature it had known in more than a decade" according to Bob Ross. He added that "we rapidly found the internal atmosphere of WW stultifying, however, and found that the organization's early commitments to a serious world revolutionary perspective had decayed beyond belief, and so we began to 'drift' out." Late in 1971 a group of WW members in New York withdrew to form the New York Revolutionary Committee, which issued several numbers of a periodical *Common Ground*, and most of the old RCL members were in that group. A year later "this evolution culminated in what was essentially a rebirth of the old RCL, now styling itself RCL [Internationalist] in order to indicate the development which had gone on. . . ." ⁵⁶

The RCL(I) began publishing a mimeographed periodical, *Internationalist News Letter*. It was edited by Peter Anton, Bob Ross and Betty West. The third number of this publication stated the orientation of the group. It said that "we seek today to wed the full, creative and dynamic theoretical heritage of the 'Old Left'—of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky—to the vital, onrushing current of the militant 'New Left'. . . . Un-

conditionally, and with only the most marginal political criticisms—all oriented toward integrating military policy with an overall revolutionary strategy—we applaud the examples of the Days of Rage, Mayday, the attacks on university 'Defense research' centers, the bombings of Centre Street, Albany and the Pentagon, and the Black Liberation Army's defense of the ghettos against their military occupiers." This statement added that "without tremor or remorse, we call for more of the same, and readily accept the label 'Weather Trots.'"⁵⁷

In June 1974 the RCL(I) began publishing a printed bimonthly newspaper, *Internationalist Workers*, edited by Sol Pero, R. H. Ross, and Sarah Kaplan. The first issue proclaimed that "through this instrument of struggle, we hope that others may join us in the protracted battle to construct a proletarian combat party—a party capable of reintegrating the revolutionary heritage of Bolshevism that has been so often misunderstood and so often betrayed during the past fifty years. . . ." It added that the new periodical "does not advance self-serving claims to 'papal infallibility.'"⁵⁸

The first issue of the *Internationalist Worker* indicated the group's positions on various subjects. It observed in connection with the suppression of the Symbionese Liberation Army that "we of RCL(I), from the outset, have had a position of defense of the SLA against the bourgeois state." It referred to "the USSR's necessary intervention in Czechoslovakia to halt the Dubcek drift toward capitalist restoration. . . ." It carried a long article opposing Detente as "another imperialist attack maneuver" against the USSR. This article ended with "the following interim demands: (1) The formation of peoples' militia in the USSR and Eastern Europe, REARM THE MASSES! (2) No more privileges for bureaucrats and technocrats! (3) Prompt resolution of Soviet and Chinese differences, according to revolutionary principles (4) Strengthening (& not reducing) Warsaw Pact forces. (5) Stepping UP of So-

viet protection of Cuba, especially in bloody aftermath of Chile, (6) Establishment of joint Soviet-Chinese defense of the Korean, Cuban, Yemeni, and Vietnamese workers' states, (7) Arming and supplying of revolutionary and national liberation forces as a matter of principle & not just opportunity, (8) Restoration and expansion of Marxism-Leninism throughout the workers' states, so that they can fully contribute to the world (permanent) revolution."⁵⁹

Late in 1982 the RCL(I) again sought to merge with the Workers World Party, and until a decision had been reached agreed to abide by the internal discipline of the WWP. In December of that year their proposals were rejected by the Workers World Party and according to John Palmieri "the RCL(I) was reconstituted." It began again to publish *Internationalist Worker*. Like the WWP, it tended to take a strongly pro-Soviet line, supporting the Soviet Union's shooting down of the South Korean airliner, for instance.⁶⁰

The Focus Group

A small group associated with an equally small break-away from the main body of International Trotskyism, the Fomento Obrero Revolucionario (FOR), headed by the Mexican one-time leader of Spanish Trotskyism Manuel Fernández Grandizo (better known as G. Munis), was established in the United States in the 1970s. This was the FOR Organizing Committee in the U.S., or FOCUS.

The principal organizer of FOCUS was Stephen Schwartz, a young writer from San Francisco. He entered into contact with FOR through correspondence, contributing occasionally to its journal published in France, *Alarme*. Then, after a visit to France and discussions with Munis in 1979, Schwartz (writing under the name S. Solsona) and a small group began publishing in San Francisco a periodical, *The Alarm*.

The association of FOCUS with the international FOR was of relatively short dura-

tion. When the United States group expressed sympathy for the Spanish affiliate of FOR, which was purged by Munis and the international group, Munis responded in 1981 by expelling FOCUS from the international organization. FOCUS thereupon announced that "we will carry forward the banner of the FOR with or without the 'official' approval of Munis. . . ."61

Elsewhere in this volume we trace the evolution of the thinking of G. Munis and in particular his denunciation of the trade union movement as a brake on working class revolution. After their break with him the FOCUS group expressed their unhappiness with Munis's failure to suggest an alternative to the majority trade union movements as a field in which revolutionaries could operate. In October 1983 they published an extensive analysis of this issue, concluding that "in the absence of a continuous forward dynamic within the class, such as will make the resolution of all these matters an immediate issue, we now propose that revolutionary-minded workers enter and seek to build the small anarcosyndicalist organizations, the CNT and IWW. These at least offer a history of opposition to the union bureaucracies. To the extent that these organizations have maintained the tradition of such opposition, they should be studied, supported and defended."⁶²

By 1984 Stephen Schwartz had dropped out of the leadership of the FOCUS group. Its publication, *The Alarm* was transferred to Portland, Oregon, "because the FOCUS group here is largest and can put more effort into the magazine than the Bay Area folks." The first issue published in Portland noted that "most of our members remain active in the IWW, a controversial move made at the beginning of 1984. For the most part our membership has been received positively by other wobblers, a number welcoming us heartily because of our revolutionary positions."⁶³

The Proletarian Tasks Tendency

In the early 1980s there was still another small group established which proclaimed

its basic loyalty to Trotskyism: the Proletarian Tasks Tendency. Its orientation was indicated by an editorial in the second issue of its periodical, *Workers Review*, which, after stating that "we are committed to the Transitional Program, the reconstruction of the world Trotskyist movement on a principled basis," observed "We also believe that a major political problem within those organizations that call themselves Trotskyist or Communist is the tendency towards centralism and away from democracy. . . ."64 We have little further information about the origins of this group, although it apparently was based in the San Francisco area.

The Strange Case of the National Caucus of Labor Committees

Certainly the most peculiar offshoot of Trotskyism in the United States has been the so-called National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC). Originating in the mid to late 1960s as a dissident Trotskyist group, it had by the end of the next decade become an extreme right-wing organization.

Through all phases of its ideological and political evolution the National Caucus of Labor Committees minutely followed the changes in ideas, fantasies, and even delusions of its founder and leader Lyndon LaRouche, who until the mid-1970s called himself Lyn Marcus (a name presumably derived from Lenin and Marx). His writing made up a large part of the organization's publications, particularly its "theoretical" presentations. The NCLC also followed LaRouche in one of the things which differentiated it from virtually the whole radical movement—its peculiar preoccupation with sex and excrement resulting in a widespread use of scatological language, bordering on the obscene, both in its leaders' and members' public speaking and in the group's written material.

LaRouche also set the pattern in establishing another characteristic of the NCLC, its frequent emphasis on violence. This emphasis was not confined to a theoretical use of

violence as a "road to power," but the day-to-day use of it to maintain discipline within its own organization and to seek to intimidate or destroy its political opponents.

Finally, LaRouche led the NCLC in a third unique feature of the group, its delusions of grandeur. These delusions went far beyond the characteristic belief of virtually all radical groups that their ideas and probably their organizations will ultimately win power and mold national and international society—as expressed, for instance, in the Fourth International's claim to be "the Party of the World Socialist Revolution." LaRouche and NCLC pictured themselves as already being a major factor in national politics which would be able to seize power within a very few years and as having great influence within political parties and governments of Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Far East.

Indeed, the National Caucus of Labor Committees was more completely the expression of one man than any other group which had its origins in International Trotskyism. Even Trotsky never demanded—and received—the degree of absolute subservience and conformity which LaRouche insisted on.

Origins of the NCLC

Lyndon LaRouche, Jr., was born into a family of Quaker dissidents in New Hampshire in 1922. During World War II he was first a conscientious objector, but then changed his mind and saw noncombatant military service in the China-Burma-India theater. He joined the Socialist Workers Party either in 1948 or 1949 and remained in it until 1966.⁶⁵ Although he never became a major figure in the swp, as a secondary leader he opposed the expulsion of those who were to become the Spartacist League.⁶⁶

With the formation of the Workers League after the expulsion of Tim Wohlforth and his followers from the swp, Lyn Marcus joined its ranks for a few months. A Spartacist publication commented on this period

that "Marcus and Wohlforth, during their collaboration . . . claimed they were in the Iskra period, by which they meant they should act as brain-trusters for the rest of the left. This concept is a consistent pillar of Marcusism, the contention that his claim to leadership rests on his being smarter than everybody else."

After a few months, LaRouche-Marcus withdrew from the wl and joined the Spartacist League. He was reported to have broken with the Spartacists "over unanimous opposition to his position that the trouble with the Castroites was that Castro didn't know enough Marxian economics to maneuver in the world market."⁶⁷ Subsequently, Lyndon LaRouche gave a somewhat different version of his activities right after leaving the swp, writing that he "went through the process of attempting to salvage some remnants from the swp."⁶⁸ After leaving the Spartacist League LaRouche organized his own group, known then as the sds Labor Committee, constituting a faction within the Students for a Democratic Society. The group played a role in the leadership of the student uprising at Columbia University in 1968.⁶⁹ However, the LaRouche group did not stay long within sds. They were said to have broken with it over their position in support of the New York City teachers' strike in 1969.⁷⁰ The sds generally opposed that strike and supported the "community control" program of those who opposed the walkout. Once outside of the sds the LaRouchites formally established the National Caucus of Labor Committees.

The Statement of Founding Principles

What was for half a decade or more to be the basic political document of the NCLC, its Statement of Founding Principles, was officially accepted at a national conference in January 1971. It contained the peculiar mishmash of philosophical ideas, economic notions, and political prescriptions which was then characteristic of the Marcus-LaRouche group. It also underscored the highly

elitist approach to politics and essentially disparaging attitude toward the working class characteristic of the NCLC.

The statement consisted of twenty-five numbered points. The first five dealt with philosophical questions and contained the kind of idiosyncratic language which was becoming typical of LaRouche and his followers. For instance, point 3 said that "all the conceptions of human conscious thought, formal, logical reasoning included, are produced by a noetic, concept-creating process which determines the 'axioms' . . . of formal reasoning, but which axioms or formal reasoning is inherently incapable of providing or explaining. That the real foundations of human knowledge in this noetic process of mind can be uncovered only by a dialectical examination of the process by which whole systems of formal logic are exposed as fallacious and totally new world-conceptions produced. . . ."

Some points have a more or less familiar Marxist ring. However, others set forth clearly the group's highly elitist ideas. Point 11 says that "the central problem of humanity today is therefore the fact that the working class [as an economic class] is not capable of spontaneously becoming a political class for itself. . . ." Point 12 goes on to say that "therefore, the political existence of the working class depends upon the intervention of an 'outside agency,' whose function it is to bring the political [working] class for itself into being. The 'outside agency' can only be a social formation which has already attained an advanced approximation of the working class consciousness which the working class itself lacks. Only a handful of the capitalist intelligentsia is capable of fulfilling this decisive role. . . ."

Point 13 elaborated further on this "revolutionary intelligentsia," which is "the embryonic representation of a new human species, a Promethean species which seeks to reproduce its own kind from the ranks of the working class. . . ."

Point 17 reached the logical conclusion of the previous positions, and without men-

tioning Lyndon LaRouche by name proclaimed his right to determine the NCLC ideas and activities. It said that "while the cadre organization must submit to the class interests of the potential political [working] class for itself, that means and demands insulating the vanguard organization from corrupting intrusions of reactionary [bourgeois] ideology dominant among working people generally, oppressed minorities, and radical students, etc., in a capitalist society. Realization of socialist conceptions means that alien political ideas have ipso facto no voting rights over the formulation of policy within the vanguard organization. It means that the less-developed consciousness of socialist principles must be subordinated to the most advanced consciousness within the organization."⁷¹

"Hegemony on the Left"

During its early years the NCLC put great emphasis on obtaining "hegemony" in left-wing U.S. politics. As early as 1970 it claimed that it was well on the way to this. The NCLC magazine *Campaigner* wrote that "the Labor Committees already know a thing or two about the process of struggle for left hegemony. Our organization has been developed under simultaneous assault by both the anarchist 'crazies' and Progressive Labor Party, and has not only survived but grown. . . . We did not defeat PLP by accident. Excepting the Black Panther Party, which is obviously a very special case, the National Caucus of Labor Committees has emerged to present third 'position' in the struggle for left-hegemony in the U.S. movement."⁷²

In the spring of 1973 Lyndon LaRouche decided to "destroy" the Communist Party. In an editorial in *New-Solidarity* in April, entitled "Death of the CPUSA," he said that "readers will obtain a taste of our ruthlessness in the way we proceed to finish off the Communist Party." He said that the NCLC would "conduct the most ruthless mopping-up operation against each of its ragged for-

mations. . . .” A few days later, he announced that “the CP cannot hold a meeting on the East Coast. . . . We’ll mop them up in two months.”⁷³

These attacks on the CP were labelled “Operation Mop-Up” by LaRouche. Dennis King has described what happened: “According to participants, Mop-Up was efficiently organized. In most cases, isolated individuals or small groups were caught by surprise and overwhelmed. The flying squads often were brought from out of town—so their faces would not be recognized—and would leave town before the police could investigate. Former NCLC members remember it all with shame. ‘We’d be ten against one,’ said one NCLC defector, ‘and the CP member we’d pound on would be some elderly guy.’”⁷⁴

This description is confirmed by NCLC sources. An “Extra” of *New Solidarity* on April 16, 1973, said that “a significant amount of CP-YWIL blood was spilled at Temple University in Philadelphia last Wednesday. . . .”⁷⁵ It was reported that between April and September 1973 there were at least sixty assaults by NCLC people on members of the Communist Party and the SWP.⁷⁶

Some NCLC members were shocked by Operation Mop-Up, and apparently expressed their unhappiness. LaRouche savagely attacked them in a way which was becoming characteristic in the organization. In an internal bulletin of the group, he wrote that “I am going to make you organizers. . . . What I shall do is to expose to you the cruel fact of your sexual impotence. . . . I will take away from you all hope that you can flee the terrors of politics to the safety of ‘personal life.’ I shall do this by showing to you that your frightened personal sexual life contains for you such terrors as the outside world could never offer you.”⁷⁷

“Deprogramming” and Other Paranoia

After Operation Mop-Up, LaRouche turned his followers’ attention in another direction,

bringing into play another strain of agitation and propaganda which was to become characteristic of the NCLC, paranoia. He suddenly developed the idea that the CIA was centering attention and resources on trying to penetrate the NCLC and was “programming” its leaders and members. Most notorious was the case of Chris White, who had been the NCLC’s representative in Great Britain. LaRouche summoned White home and submitted him to a process of “deprogramming,” which the NCLC widely publicized. This case was followed by the “deprogramming” of various other leaders and rank and filers of the NCLC. LaRouche claimed that he was the only one who knew how to carry out successful “deprogramming.”

LaRouche, in explaining the kind of “programming” to which NCLC people had been exposed, said that “the victim’s sense of reality is turned inside out . . . in the dozen cases . . . known to have been brainwashed for the CIA or LEAA, the victim characteristically accused the Labor Committees of having ingeniously brainwashed its members. . . .”⁷⁸

LaRouche claimed that the “programming” was part of a world-wide plot. He said that “we are now in the second phase of a psy-war game designed by the CIA, that is, a psychological warfare game conducted on a scale of four continents, in which the CIA is playing psychological warfare with an organization, the Labor Committee. . . .” He added that “there was, but that’s not relevant, an assassination plot against me by the KGB.”⁷⁹

Although the publicity about LaRouche’s “deprogramming” of NCLC members was soon dropped, both the paranoia about persecution of LaRouche and of the NCLC continued to be an article of faith, and LaRouche’s own psychological methods to combat it continued. *The New York Times* reported in October 1979 that “the party’s founder has conducted grueling encounter sessions to keep members in line. According to the accounts of former members, those who doubt Mr. LaRouche are summoned before a small group and grilled about their fears

and guilt until they break down. Husbands or wives are asked about their partners' sexual practices."⁸⁰

The paranoia continued. For instance, in July 1977, *New Solidarity* carried an article headlined "Carter Caught Redhanded in Cointelpro vs. USLP," that is, an espionage plot against the U.S. Labor Party, then the public face of the NCLC.⁸¹ In October 1978 the same newspaper had an article headlined "Zionists' Assassination Threat on LaRouche is Put on Front Burner."⁸²

The "Intelligence Network"

In September 1971 the NCLC first established its "intelligence network." This was a unique organization in which members of the group channeled information to the NCLC headquarters from all over the United States, and subsequently from Europe and Latin America. The national organization then distributed this information through a series of publications, and through "briefings." It is not entirely clear just who attended these "briefings," although there was mention in the NCLC press of daily meetings of the group's National Committee at which members were told of information the Intelligence Network had acquired.

Early in 1975 in a document entitled *A Fact Sheet: What Are the Labor Committees?*, the NCLC claimed that "Labor Committee Intelligence has always functioned in the way the research departments of a major news service *should* function. . . . This fact-gathering capability is supplemented with currently increasing importance, by information contributed from workers and others associated with the day-to-day activities of the Labor Committees and Labor Party."

The NCLC claimed special competence for its news gathering. The same document said that "in the process of cumulative research into current political developments and related strategic matters, our intelligence work has aggregated special competence in respect to the behind-the-scenes processes

largely governing the explicit activities of governments."⁸³

As one who was upon occasion approached and provided with NCLC "intelligence" about Latin American countries, the author can testify that these "inside stories" were more often than not flights of fancy rather than inside information.

The LaRouche-NCLC Economic-Social Program

In the mid-1970s Lyndon LaRouche and the NCLC put forward a global economic and social program which they never entirely abandoned. It consisted principally of their proposal for an International Development Bank, the establishment of a "transfer ruble" as a new world currency, and fusion power as a solution to all the world's energy problems.

They published their world economic program as a pamphlet, *IDB: How the International Development Bank Will Work*, and elaborated on it endlessly in their press. An article by Criton Zoakes, "NCLC Director of Intelligence," proclaimed that "there is absolutely not one single solitary alternate road for putting the world economy together again except the way we've described."⁸⁴

The NCLC explained their proposed International Development Bank as bringing together the tremendous productive possibilities of the industrial countries and the great development needs of the poor nations: "Formally, the IDB comes into existence in a manner analogous to the effective financial reorganization of any major bank being rescued from illiquidity collapse. A new bank is created to continue the essential operations of the old, while major categories of unpayable carried-forward indebtedness are placed in a moratorium 'deep freeze' and negotiations for future liquidation of that debt are conducted separately from day-to-day operations of the new institution."⁸⁵

The idea of a debt moratorium for the developing countries became a permanent

part of the "program" of the NCLC, but, they did not continue to emphasize the IDB.

More idiosyncratic was LaRouche's proposal for a "transferable ruble" as a new world currency. Criton Zoakes described this by saying that "when we establish the transferable ruble standard as a reserve currency, it will create with this flow of trade from Western Europe into Eastern Europe a transferable ruble surplus into Western Europe. At the same time it creates a transferable ruble indebtedness of Third World countries to the Comecon. Now Western Europe still continues to require commodity and raw materials imports from the Third World for which it pays with its surplus transferable rubles. Thus it provides the Third World countries the means with which to pay their obligations to the Comecon sector."⁸⁶

This description is not so markedly different from the way in which the "transferable dollar" has functioned as a world currency since World War II. The major problem with it, as a practical proposition, of course, is the fact that the Soviet ruble has never been "transferable," and there has been no indication that the pre-Gorbachev Soviet Union leadership has ever considered the possibility of allowing free purchase and sale of their national currency.

The third element in the socioeconomic program of LaRouche and the NCLC was emphasis on atomic power. It particularly emphasized the possibilities of "fusion power," a kind of nuclear energy which in theory is exceedingly productive and "clean," but which is only in the early development stage. The NCLC organized a Fusion Energy Foundation with the purpose of pushing this particular panacea, and much of the public attention the NCLC received came from its members at airports and other transport centers who distributed and sold literature supporting atomic energy.

The NCLC Conspiracy Mania

By the mid-1970s Lyndon LaRouche—and therefore, the NCLC—had developed an ex-

tensive conspiracy theory of history. The objective of the conspiracy, according to them, was to dominate the world, or to destroy it if control was impossible. The details of the conspiracy were developed by LaRouche over a number of years.

Dennis King explained the fully developed LaRouche conspiracy theory (as of 1982): "He claimed that an evil 'oligarchy'—a conspiratorial elite of usurers opposed to industrial or scientific progress—emerged in ancient Babylon [at the time of the Jewish captivity] and molded the Jewish religion into a 'cult' to be employed as its fifth column. This oligarchy—the 'Whore of Babylon'—supposedly set itself apart from humanity, developed a cosmopolitan antihuman tradition, shifted its headquarters to the West, and conspired through the centuries to achieve global dominance."⁸⁷ King adds that "in the era of capitalism, the oligarchy allegedly moved to London. Under the leadership of the Rothschilds, and using the Churchill family and the Free Masons as its cover, it subverted the English aristocracy. It then concocted the 'cult' of Zionism to supplement Judaism as an international tool."⁸⁸

For a number of years the NCLC claimed that Nelson Rockefeller was the center of the worldwide conspiracy. The extent to which this argument went was shown in a lead article in the January 5, 1978, issue of *New Solidarity*. It started by noting that "in the last forty-eight hours, the populations of Northern Europe and sections of the East bloc . . . have been hit with the worst storm in Europe in twenty-nine years." The article went on to assert that "only Rockefeller, Kissinger, and their National Security Council apparatus have the motive, capability, and opportunity to carry out such an insane outrage as this against the working people of Western Europe and of the Eastbloc."⁸⁹

Later, LaRouche dropped Nelson Rockefeller as the focus of his conspiracy theory, and denounced President Jimmy Carter. Typical of the NCLC statements in this pe-

riod was one of Bruce Todd, the NCLC-U.S. Labor Party candidate for Congress in the 15th District of New Jersey, who was quoted in October 1976 as saying that "if Jimmy Carter is elected, the United States will be in a thermonuclear war with the Soviet Union within six to seven months after his inauguration."⁹⁰

Of course, this, like most of the LaRouche-NCLC confident predictions of future disasters, did not come to pass. These failures were usually explained on the basis of the NCLC having prevented them by announcing their likelihood. Typical was a throwaway of the U.S. Labor Party entitled "Kissinger Unleashes Terrorists on United States," which commented that "You know about Kissinger's and Rockefeller's bloody schemes to start a nuclear war. . . . Kissinger and Rockefeller tried this operation once before in January 1974. At that time, the U.S. Labor Party's mass inoculation against U.S. terror operations forced them to pull back. . . ."⁹¹

It has been frequently argued that anti-Semitism is the underlying theme of the LaRouche-NCLC conspiracy theory developed in the 1970s. There were certainly frequent references to Jewish bankers, not necessarily identified explicitly as Jews, as evil figures of the past and present. There were also many attacks on "Zionists" under circumstances which might as well read "Jews." Open appeals to antipathy against Jews were relatively rare. Nonetheless, there were sometimes such open anti-Semitic outbursts. For example, in an article dealing with supposed espionage of the Federal government against the NCLC, Costa Kalimtgis wrote in 1977 that "NBC, which is owned by 'Our Crowd' investment houses [Lehman Bros, Goldman Sachs, Kuhn-Loeb of the Schiff-Warbourg group, and Lazard Freres], and whose Board of Directors were large contributors and backers of the Carter campaign, were scheduling a half-hour slander program on the U.S. Labor Party. . . ."⁹² This clash with the National Broadcasting

Company had interesting results. Lyndon LaRouche lodged a suit for \$150 million in Federal District Court in Alexandria, Virginia, on the claim that NBC had "defamed" him. LaRouche lost that suit, but NBC was awarded \$3 million in a countersuit which "charged that people in the organization of Mr. LaRouche interfered with NBC's newsgathering while the network was preparing reports on him."⁹³

The United States Labor Party

For a number of years the NCLC worked through the U.S. Labor Party as its electoral vehicle. They ran numerous local candidates, and in 1976 Lyndon LaRouche himself was the party's presidential nominee. They claimed to believe that he would be elected. *New Solidarity* said that "the . . . ballot strategy is to conduct petition drives in the twenty states where the Labor Party is strongest, and in ten contiguous, populous states where the Party has extensive penetration. . . . The twenty states where the Labor Party local offices are now located comprise about three-fourths of the U.S. population and account for fifty-four percent (289) of the Electoral College vote. The additional ten target states represent another fifty-six Electoral College votes, bringing the target total electoral votes to 345. . . . A total of 270 Electoral College votes is required to win the Presidency and Vice Presidency."⁹⁴

Once the election was over, LaRouche and his followers made two claims: that they had gotten a larger vote than any other left-wing candidate in U.S. history, and that Gerald Ford and not Jimmy Carter had won the election. Their "analysis" of the election results claimed that LaRouche had received 3,500,000 votes, rather than the 18,500 votes with which he had been officially credited. In New York State it was claimed that LaRouche had received 384,000 votes rather than the official 1,727.⁹⁵ Charging "fraud" in the election count, the NCLC said that

"the present parading of Jimmy Carter as the President-Elect is a patently fraudulent act being carried out by the three major television networks and the two wire services. . . ." This *New Solidarity* article modestly promised that if Gerald Ford should "choose . . . to not seek the Presidency . . . LaRouche, in the interest of national security and national unity, announced at the same time his willingness to avail himself as a candidate for President-Elect in case Dole also chooses not to ask for the Electoral College vote."⁹⁶

Almost two years after the 1976 election, LaRouche, still billed as the Chairman of the U.S. Labor Party, claimed a major role for the party in U.S. politics. He said that "the U.S. Labor Party declares the de facto existence of a new political leadership in the United States. We propose to name this new leadership the *American Whig Policy Coalition*. The Coalition will include the U.S. Labor Party, of course, but will also include Republicans, Democrats, and independents, which, as a combination, will determine who is President of the U.S. in January 1981."⁹⁷

The National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC)

In spite of aligning himself with the far right Republicans in the campaign to annul the results of the 1976 election, in 1979 LaRouche and the NCLC switched their tactics. They buried the U.S. Labor Party, established instead the National Democratic Policy Committee, and decided to work inside the Democratic Party. In the 1980 election LaRouche ran in fourteen Democratic state primaries. The NCLC raised enough money in that campaign to qualify for \$526,000 in matching funds from the Federal Election Commission, a body which LaRouche and the NCLC had violently denounced four years before.⁹⁸

During the 1980 campaign the NCLC and LaRouche indicated that they had not

changed their nature. LaRouche "contended that he was the target of an international conspiracy to kill him." When his people left New Hampshire, a "New Hampshire Target List" was found in the motel room of one of LaRouche's campaign workers including the names of mayors and city clerks of several New Hampshire cities and towns, and other people, with the notation, "These are the criminals to burn—we want calls coming in to these fellows day and night—use your networks to best advantage." Attorney General Rath, one of those on the list, commented: "That would be consistent with the calls I received. I got about 50 home calls on Sunday. . . . Some of the callers said, 'We know where you live.'"⁹⁹

Two and a half years later, the National Democratic Policy Committee received publicity in the May 1985 local school board election in New York City, where it ran candidates in several districts. Both the *New York Times*¹⁰⁰ and Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, urged the voters not to support the group.¹⁰¹ Early in 1984 the NDPC ran a number of school board candidates in New Jersey. They were all defeated overwhelmingly. In Piscataway, where there were originally only two candidates running for three posts and the LaRouche group's nomination of two additional ones would have assured the election of one, a write-in campaign brought victory of the write-in nominee by three-and-a-half to one over the leading LaRouche nominee.¹⁰²

In the 1984 general election LaRouche again sought the Democratic nomination. He received \$185,000 in matching funds from the Federal Electoral Commission. After the primary campaign LaRouche ran as an "independent Democrat," getting on the ballot in nineteen states.¹⁰³ He was officially credited with having gotten 78,773 votes.¹⁰⁴

A New Jersey political commentator, Tom Hester, noting the presence of LaRouche's candidates in that state, observed

about the recent evolution of the group's ideas that "the movement runs on an odd blend of political dogma. It warns of a corporate-Marxist conspiracy to control the world while criticizing the Polish Solidarity effort. Last year it locked onto Republican President Ronald Reagan's 'Star Wars' proposal for the development of laser beam technology to blow away incoming Soviet missiles and has become its major proponent. LaRouche believes the Holocaust was a hoax."

Hester went on, "Eliot Greenspan, 34, of Haworth, the NDPC's New Jersey coordinator, is running as a Beam Technology Democrat for the U.S. Senate against Sen. Bill Bradley, D-NJ. The NDPC has candidates in eight of New Jersey's 14 congressional races. Last year the group ran on the 'Beam Technology: Stop War, Ban Depression' ticket in the Democratic legislative primary. One of its assembly candidates won the primary by default in Somerset when the county Democratic Party failed to field a candidate to oppose him."¹⁰⁵ By 1985, the newspaper of the LaRouche group, *New Solidarity*, was carrying on its banner the description, "Nonpartisan National Newspaper of the American System."¹⁰⁶

The LaRouche group suffered at least one small split. This took place in 1974. A small group called Centers for Change, describing itself as a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organization and led by Fred Newman, joined the NCLC.¹⁰⁷ But two months later Fred Newman resigned from the LaRouche group, subsequently forming the International Workers Party. Soon after quitting the NCLC Newman published a pamphlet, *A Manifesto on Method*, in which he commented that "from the very beginning of our contact with comrades of the ICLC (in October 1973) we have worked hard to change that organization while respecting its historically just claim to Hegemony. The former workers of CPC and the ICLC who founded the International Workers Party (IWP) take proper pride in the principled manner in which this struggle was conducted—frequently in the face of substantial personal abuse."¹⁰⁸

There is no information available about the subsequent evolution of the IWP.

Conclusions About National Caucus of Labor Committees

It would appear that an individual or social psychologist could best describe and explain the National Caucus of Labor Committees and its leader, Lyndon LaRouche. It is in many ways unique in its evolution not only away from orthodox Trotskyism, but from Trotskyism of any kind. Although in the United States and many other countries there have been many individuals who after leaving the Trotskyist ranks became conservatives or even reactionaries, no other Trotskyist group as such had this kind of trajectory. More than any other Trotskyist faction, it degenerated into a sect or "cult," completely subordinate to, and dedicated to the exaltation of a particular individual, its founder, Lyndon LaRouche.

Conclusion

It is clear that the groups in the United States which have had their roots—however tenuously—in International Trotskyism have evolved in diverse directions. A few of these have remained more or less loyal to the ideas expressed by Leon Trotsky, quarreling more with fellow Trotskyists than with Trotsky himself. Others, however, have taken positions as diverse as a more or less clear alignment with the heirs of Stalin, an association with anarchosyndicalism, and a move totally across the political spectrum from the far left to the far right.

Uruguayan Trotskyism

One of the oldest and longest-lived Trotskyist movements in Latin America is that of Uruguay. It was established as a result of efforts of Esteban Kikich, a Yugoslav immigrant who had carried on correspondence with James Cannon of the United States since 1926. Soon after Cannon and his associates were expelled from the U.S. Communist Party Kikich and a handful of other Eastern European immigrant workers withdrew from the Uruguayan Communist Party. But it was 1937 before a Trotskyist organization was finally established in Uruguay by Kikich and his associates. In September 1938, in reporting to the Founding Congress of the Fourth International, Pierre Naville gave the name of the Uruguayan section as the Grupo Bolchevique-Leninista.¹ He did not provide any estimate concerning how many members it had.²

The report on Latin American affiliates made to the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International in May 1940 had the following to say about Uruguay: "Our movement in Uruguay is weak. Presently, there exist two groups belonging to the IV International. These groups were united until recently in a single organization. According to our information, the split was not produced on a political basis. The names of the groups are: Liga Bolchevique-Leninista and Grupo Obrero Revolucionario. The GOR publishes a review, which doesn't appear very regularly, called *Contra la Corriente*. In its first number, there was a very confused editorial on the Russo-Finnish question. In general, this review is of a politically mediocre character. The Liga Bolchevique-Leninista has no official organ, but publishes a

Unless otherwise noted, material in this entry dealing with period before 1969 is adapted from Robert J. Alexander: *Trotskyism in Latin America*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1973.

certain number of manifestoes on the problem of the war. According to information received, it is the comrades who form the GOR who are responsible for the split. This information comes to us from the secretary of the LBL. We have received nothing from the GOR"³

The split in the Uruguayan movement at that time may have been a reflection of the division in the ranks of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. It is known that Esteban Kikich sympathized with Shachtman and his followers in that dispute. However, by the end of World War II the small Uruguayan Trotskyist movement was once again a single organization, the Liga Obrera Revolucionaria.⁴

Esteban Kikich and other Trotskyists took the lead in 1940 in organizing the Sindicato Unico de la Industria Metalúrgica, to which most metal workers of Montevideo belong. It joined the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), the country's central labor organization, which was controlled by the Stalinists. They used their control of the UGT to oust the Trotskyists from leadership of the metal workers' union.

However, the Trotskyists were able to establish a relatively strong independent union in the Ragusci and Voulminot shipbuilding and repair firm, which became one of the largest and most active unions in Montevideo. Then, when in the last years of the war the UGT largely fell apart, the Trotskyists and anarchists organized one of the three union groups which emerged at that time. This was the Comité de Enlace de Sindicatos Autónomos, and Esteban Kikich was its principal leader. It had as affiliates, among others, unions of bakers and plumbers and two shipyard workers' unions.

The Liga Obrera Revolucionaria published a regular periodical. At first called *Acción Socialista*, its name was changed to *Contra la Corriente* (*Against the Current*) in 1942. This appeared regularly for a number of years and carried extensive news about the local labor and political scene as well as information about the Fourth Inter-

national and its affiliates. By the early 1950s the name of the paper was changed once again to *Frente Obrero*.

The Trotskyists largely lost their trade union base when the country's labor movement was once again consolidated into the UGT, still led by the Communists, on the one hand, and the Confederación Sindical Uruguaya, affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, on the other. *Frente Obrero* urged the unification of these two groups but by the early 1950s did not give any indication that the Trotskyists themselves controlled any significant element in organized labor.

When the split occurred in the Fourth International in 1952-53, the Uruguayan Trotskyists stayed with the Pabloite International Secretariat. They changed their name to Partido Obrero Revolucionario (IV International). A decade later, when J. Posadas and the Latin American Bureau of the Pabloite International Secretariat broke away to form their own version of the Fourth International, the Uruguayan party joined the Posadas current. In fact, until 1968, the headquarters of the Posadas Fourth International was in Montevideo.

The Trotskyists were unable to capitalize on the serious economic, social and political crisis which slowly developed in Uruguay after World War II. Some aspects of this crisis were the decline of the country's agriculture and grazing, the exhaustion of possibilities for import substitution industrialization, an increasingly bureaucratic and inefficient social security system, and a situation in which most people in the cities had to hold two or more jobs to get a sufficient income—and often were inefficient in all of these employments.

Successive governments did little about these problems. In part, this was the result of the existence from 1950 to 1966 of a system of a plural presidency which resulted in paralyzation of all governmental initiative. On the Left the political situation was characterized by internal struggles within the

Socialist Party (particularly after the advent of the Castro regime in Cuba in 1959) which virtually eliminated that party as a serious factor in national politics; the gaining of very strong control by the Communists over the labor movement by the early 1960s; and in the latter half of the 1960s the emergence of an urban guerrilla movement, the Tupamaros. The crisis culminated with the seizure of power by the armed forces in 1973.

During most of the 1970s the Uruguayan Trotskyists were forced to function deeply underground as a result of the military dictatorship. However, even before the establishment of the dictatorship the Uruguayan Trotskyists' political policies had aroused certain controversy within International Trotskyism.

During the 1970s (and perhaps thereafter) there were two tendencies of International Trotskyism represented in Uruguay. The older of these was the Posadas Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Trotskista). It was officially "dissolved" by the Uruguayan government in March 1969.⁵ However, POR(T) in fact continued to exist. In 1971 it became part of the Frente Amplio (Wide Front), a coalition organized by a wide variety of left-wing parties for the November 1971 general elections.⁶ We have no information concerning whether the POR(T) was able to survive the military regime.

By the 1970s there also existed an affiliate of the United Secretariat in Uruguay, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Uruguay). It had been established in 1969, and it published a periodical *Tendencia Revolucionaria*.⁷

The PRT(U) also joined the Frente Amplio coalition in the 1971 election. Under the peculiar Uruguayan electoral system, in which factions of a party or elements of a coalition were able to present their separate lists of candidates, with votes cast for all factions within a given party or coalition being summed to decide which list of candidates has won, the PRT(U) was able to have its own "Lista Obrera" for candidates for the

Senate and Chamber of Deputies. However, they were forced to have ex-general Liber Seregni, the Frente Amplio nominee, at the head of their list, as candidate for president.

Other affiliates of USEC were highly critical of the participation of the PRT(U) in the Frente Amplio coalition, looking upon it as a species of popular front. However, the PRT(U) remained the Uruguayan affiliate of the United Secretariat.⁸

In 1973 the PRT(U) changed its name to Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST). With the end of the military dictatorship late in 1984, the PST sought once more to become part of the revived Broad Front. The PST was by that time a "sympathizing organization" of the United Secretariat.⁹

Varga Fourth International

Although there were several defections from the Lambertist Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CORQI) in the decade following its establishment only one of these resulted in the formation of a rival International organization. This was what at first was called the League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, and then simply the Fourth International.

The organizer of this group was Balasz Nagy, more widely known by his alias, Michel Varga. He was a Hungarian who had been secretary of the Petöfki Circle in Budapest at the time of the uprising in 1956. Fleeing to France after the collapse of the Hungarian Revolution, he was contacted by the Lambertists, particularly by Pierre Broué, who convinced him of the correctness of the Trotskyist position. Nagy-Varga entered the French Lambertist party, the Organization Communiste Internationaliste, in 1962, and also succeeded in organizing a group of other East European refugees.¹ He was head of the League of Socialist Revolutionaries of Hungary, which was recognized as a section of the Healy-Lambert International Committee of the 1960s, and subsequently of CORQI.

However, a few months after the establishment of CORQI there was a break between it and Varga. The French group OCI and CORQI denounced Varga as having been both a CIA and KGB agent, using as "proof" documents from Varga's personal archives which had come into their possession.²

This "affaire" caused considerable controversy in several factions of International Trotskyism. Finally, a "Commission of Inquiry Into the Varga Affair" was set up, consisting of members of the French Lutte Ou-

Venezuelan Trotskyism

vière, the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, the French United Secretariat affiliate, the LCR, and the international Spartacist tendency. It finally delivered its report in May 1977, which concluded that there was no evidence indicating that Varga was either a KGB or CIA agent.³

Meanwhile, Varga had set up his own international organization. It was first called the League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. Then, a January 1976 meeting proclaimed the "Fourth Open International Conference," which was succeeded by the Fourth Congress of the IV International. At those meetings the Fourth International was proclaimed to have been reconstituted.⁴

The Varga version of the Fourth International published a periodical, *La Quatrième Internationale*. From that publication it was clear that almost a decade after his break with the Lambertists Varga was still bitter against them. This was indicated in an editorial in the March 1, 1981, issue of that magazine.⁵

It is not clear how many affiliates the Varga Fourth International has had, although it would seem that it has had some following among East European exiles as well as in France, and a small party in Spain. On the occasion of a meeting in Hamburg of the Varga Fourth International in July 1982, the following organizations of the group were indicated as being represented: Partido Obrero Revolucionario of Spain; Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire of France; Tendence pour un Avant Gard Révolutionnaire of the French Antilles; Trotskyist Organization of the United States; League of Revolutionary Socialists of Hungary; Revolutionary Workers League of Poland; Revolutionary Workers League of Czechoslovakia; a Youth Committee of Norway; the Revolutionary Workers League of Sweden; and the Committee of the Fourth International of Finland.⁶

Little information is available about most of these groups.

Trotskyism was first established in Venezuela in the 1970s. From its inception, the movement there contained groups representing the different tendencies in International Trotskyism.

The first Venezuelan element associated with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International was that grouped around a monthly newspaper, *Voz Marxista*, which began to appear in 1971. It was edited by a lawyer, Alfonso Ramírez, and carried the slogan "For the construction of the Revolutionary Labor Party" (Partido Obrero Revolucionario). Aside from commentaries on the Venezuelan situation, the periodical (as in the specific case of its ninth number) carried news on the French, Ceylonese, German, and other Trotskyist groups associated with USEC.⁷ The Trotskyist periodical was very critical of the "New Force" coalition organized for the 1973 general elections and consisting of the Movimiento Electoral del Pueblo, a splinter group of the country's largest party, Acción Democrática, the Unión Republicana Democrática, a middle-class party of indefinite ideology; and the Communist Party. The tone of the attack is summed up in the final paragraph of an article in the group's newspaper: "The New Force's programmatic 'Essentials' is the most recent pollutant added to the Venezuelan environment. Those who have lost faith in this program are its authors. The final fate of the 'Essentials' will be that of so many phony programs that have been launched in Venezuela and throughout the world, with one small difference: instead of being carried off by the wind, they will be flushed down the sewer."⁸

This Trotskyist tendency, which took the name Grupo Trotskista Venezolano (GTV—Venezuelan Trotskyist Group), finally announced in August 1972 that "we have de-

cided . . . to support the candidacy of José Vicente Rangel for the presidency of the republic. Ours is critical support, and it is not irreversible."³ Rangel was the nominee of the Movimiento a Socialismo, a group which had broken away from—and taken most of the membership of—the Communist Party several years before.

The Trotskyists held at least one electoral meeting in Caracas for Rangel, reportedly attended by more than 1,000 people. Among the speakers were Rangel himself, and CTV leader Alfonso Ramírez.⁴

By 1975 the CTV had become the Liga Socialista. At the time of the nationalization of the iron mining industry by the government of President Carlos Andrés Pérez, the Liga issued a statement urging that "the MAS, MIR, CTV, the student organizations, and the political parties that claim to represent the workers and people, join together to launch a united campaign for workers control of the iron ore industry."⁵

In the middle of 1976 the Liga Socialista, which was by then publishing *Voz Socialista*, was subject to some harassment by the police. In June, seven members of the organization were arrested while selling the party paper.⁶ A month later the Liga's secretary general, Jorge Rodríguez, was picked up by the DISIP police and died while in their custody. An investigation disclosed that he had been badly beaten. Four policemen of the DISIP were tried for his murder.⁷

At the time of the 1978 election campaign there was a controversy over extending legal recognition to the Liga Socialista as a political party. The Minister of Interior objected to such recognition by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.⁸ At a meeting of the National Committee of the Liga which decided to appeal their situation to the United Nations and to Amnesty International there were present not only members of the Committee but leaders of three important labor unions and a vice president of the Teachers Federation.⁹ Recognition was finally granted by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.¹⁰

Another Trotskyist organization estab-

lished in Venezuela in the early 1970s was the Grupo Cuarta Internacional (GCI), associated with the Lambertist CORQI tendency of International Trotskyism. In 1973 the GCI reached agreement with the leadership of the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), which had recently been reorganized and relegalized after a long period of guerrilla activities. According to this agreement the Trotskyists were admitted as members of the MIR and were allowed to function as a faction within the party.

At one point the GCI people got so deeply involved in the MIR that they virtually lost their own identity. Although they were frequently urged to do so by CORQI, they did not establish their own national newspaper. When a factional controversy developed between two elements of the MIR, led respectively by Moisés Moleiro and Américo Martín, the Trotskyists aligned themselves with the Moleiro faction, which still proclaimed its loyalty to Marxism-Leninism.

However, the GCI finally led a split in the MIR which resulted in the formation of the MIR Proletario. At a conference of the GCI in mid 1980 which was attended also by two delegates of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, it was decided that "The GCI will continue to capitalize on its entrism work with the aim of regrouping and organizing within the MIR Proletario the working-class cadres of the MIR; parallel to this, the GCI and the PST will establish the political bases to submit to discussion of the militants of the GCI, the MIR Proletario, and the PST looking to the fusion in a single organization of the Trotskyists of Venezuela."

The GCI delegates were critical of their own execution of entrism in the MIR. Although they argued that it had made it possible for them to form a national organization, "We ourselves limited, by our oscillating and uncertain orientation, the achievements we might have made."¹¹

A third Trotskyist group which appeared in Venezuela in the 1970s was the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST). It had its origins in the MAS, the party formed in the

late 1960s by dissident members and leaders of the Communist Party. For a while, a group of Trotskyists worked with the MAS as a faction. In 1974 they broke away from that party and formed the PST.¹² This group, which was aligned with the Bolshevik Tendency of Nahuel Moreno, became a sympathizing member of the United Secretariat.¹³

When the Bolshevik Tendency broke with the United Secretariat, and then formed, together with the Lambertists, the so-called Fourth International (International Committee) in 1980, the two Venezuelan organizations associated with the BT and CORQI, that is, the PST and the Grupo Cuarta Internacional, merged, forming the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores Unificado. At the time of the split between the Morenoists and the Lambertists in 1981, the PSTU sided with the Moreno faction, and became a founding member of the International Workers League (IVth International).¹⁴

In 1982 the Morenoist faction of international Trotskyism claimed that the only surviving Trotskyist group in Venezuela was the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores Unificado. It was then publishing a periodical, *La Chispa Socialista*.¹⁵

During much of the 1930s one of the major centers of strength of International Trotskyism was what is today known as Vietnam. That region was also the scene of what was probably unique in the world at that time, a united front between the Trotskyists and the Stalinists—a united front which did not prevent the Stalinists a decade later from murdering virtually all of those Trotskyist leaders with whom they had been allied in the earlier period.

Before World War II present-day Vietnam consisted of three separate states. In the north was Tonkin, which together with the empire of Annam in the center constituted a single French protectorate. In the south was Cochinchina, an out-and-out French colony centering on the city of Saigon. The strength of the Vietnamese Trotskyists was concentrated in that period principally in Cochinchina.

Stalinism and Trotskyism

Origins of Vietnamese Stalinism

The founder of the Vietnamese Communist Party was a man who was then known as Nguyen Ai Quoc, but became famous later as Ho Chi Minh. He was in France at the end of the First World War and was a member of the French Socialist Party. He is said to have attended the congress in Tours in 1920 at which the Socialist Party was converted into the French Communist Party, to which he also belonged. In June 1923 he was sent by the French Communists to Moscow to attend the University of the Toilers of the East and to serve as French representative in the new Peasants International. He was chosen as the Asian member of the directing body of that International, a subsidiary of the Comintern.

Nguyen Ai Quoc was also a delegate to the Fifth Congress of the Communist International in mid-1924. Early in the following year he was designated by the Comintern to serve on the staff of Michael Borodin in Canton, with the assignment to work to establish an Indochinese Communist Party.¹ The immediate result of his efforts was the setting up in June 1925 at Canton of the Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth League.² It was principally out of this group that the Vietnamese Communist Party, or Indochinese Communist Party (PCTI), as it soon came to be called, was formed. By 1930 there were three rival Communist groups, which Nguyen Ai Quoc was finally able to merge into a single organization in February of that year.³

The new party had almost immediate success, particularly among the peasants. By mid-1930 peasant groups under Communist leadership were involved in a virtual insurrection, and in at least two localities established "soviets." However, this movement was violently suppressed by French military forces and as a consequence, as I. Milton Sacks wrote, "Virtually the entire apparatus of the Indochina Communist Party was smashed."⁴

Origins of Vietnamese Trotskyism

The Vietnamese Trotskyist movement did not arise from a split in the Communist Party, although undoubtedly the collapse of the Stalinists in 1930-31 helped the recruiting effort of the Trotskyists. The beginnings of Vietnamese Trotskyism were to be found in the National Party of Independence of Vietnam, also called the Annamite Party of Independence, which was founded in France among Vietnamese students there and was first led by Nguyen The Truyen, who returned to Indochina in December 1927. With his departure the party was reorganized, its principal leaders being Ta Thu Thau and Huynh Van Phuong.⁵ Ta Thu Thau had founded in Saigon an illegal nationalist revolutionary group known as

Jeune Annam before he had left to study in France.⁶

The young people were very unhappy with the current position of the Comintern with regard to colonial questions. Daniel Hémerly has noted that Ta Thu Thau and his comrades reproached it for its empiricism, the incoherence of its Chinese policy, but above all its not taking into account the interests of the colonial revolutionary movements. The International, they thought was proving incapable. . . "of aiding the Vietnam revolutionaries and going beyond Sunyatsenism."

Toward the end of 1929 Ta Thu Thau, Huynh Van Phuong, Phan Van Chang, and others joined the French Left Opposition, then led principally by Alfred Rosmer. On May 22, 1930, they organized a demonstration in front of the Elysée Palace, as a result of which nineteen Vietnamese students were deported back to Saigon on May 23. These included Ta Thu Thau, Huynh Van Phuong, and Phan Van Chang.⁷

When they returned home the students found that there already existed several Communist opposition groups in the Saigon area. One was the Ligue Communiste (Lien Minh Cong San Doan), led by Dao Van Long (also known as Dao Hung Long), a painter and one time member of the Association of Revolutionary Vietnamese Youth. It had a membership of about fifty and circulated a mimeographed periodical *Clarté Rouge* (Vung Hong) in villages near Saigon. In January 1931 this group entered into contact with the Trotskyists recently returned from France, one of whom, Ho Huu Tuong, had brought back with him the theses of the Left Opposition. In May 1931 the group was reorganized and began to publish an illegal periodical, *Le Communiste* (Cong San).

In August the Ligue Communiste merged with the group of returnees from France to found the Opposition de Gauche Indochinoise (Dong Duong Doi Lap Ta Pahi), also known as the October Group from its periodical, *October* (Thang Muoi). In 1932 it

was reinforced by dissidents from the Saigon Stalinist organization. However, in October 1932 the group was decimated by the general roundup of Communists by the colonial authorities.

The Trotskyists were soon divided into three groups, "of which it is not easy to understand the differences." These were the *Opposition de Gauche Indochinoise*, led by Dao Hung Long and Ho Huu Tuong; *Communisme Indochinois* (Dong Duong Cong San), led by Ta Thu Thau, organized in 1931; and a study circle, *Editions de l'Opposition de Gauche* (Ta Doi Lap Tung Thus), organized early in 1932 by Huynh Van Phuong and Phan Van Chang. Ta Thu Thau's group had a bimonthly journal *Le Prolétaire* (Vo San), and published a pamphlet, *L'Organisation d'une Cellule d'Entreprise*. Phan Van Chang's group, with its headquarters in the Orly garage in Saigon, which was owned by Huynh Van Phuong, translated the *Communist Manifesto*, *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, and fifteen other classical Marxist works.⁸

I. Milton Sacks has noted that "the principal issues dividing these groups were tactical divergencies arising from their collaboration with the Stalinists. . . . They were all agreed, however, in accepting the line that Leon Trotsky had developed in his condemnation of the Communist International under the leadership of Stalin."⁹

The three Trotskyist groups held a joint conference in April 1932, although Ta Thu Thau had at first thought it better to work within the Indochinese Communist Party. In August 1932 the Trotskyists were rounded up along with the Stalinists, and in May 1933 they were tried, and twelve were condemned to varying periods in jail. However, Ta Thu Thau was freed on January 21, 1933, for lack of evidence. It was three years before a formal Trotskyist group was again established.¹⁰

Efforts to unite the Trotskyists were only partially successful. I. Milton Sacks has noted that "the split in their ranks that de-

veloped in 1932 was to be a permanent feature of Vietnamese Trotskyism." He added that "one group, led by Ta Thu Thau, threw its full efforts behind the new *La Lutte* organization and was called the Struggle Group for this reason. The other group, known popularly as October Group, named after its illegal magazine (published 1931-36), was under the leadership of Ho Huu Tuong. The October Group supported *La Lutte* but criticized Ta Thu Thau and his followers for collaborating too closely with the Indochina Communist Party."¹¹

The need for a legal organization was generally recognized by both the Trotskyists and the Stalinists. Both groups were faced with the problem of getting enough intellectuals with French cultural training to operate on a legal basis, and with maintaining contact of these intellectuals with the masses of the workers and peasants. In the face of these problems the Stalinists and Trotskyists had complementary advantages. The Trotskyists had an outstanding group of young intellectuals, whereas the Communists already had a substantial illegal organization with contacts among the masses.¹²

Trotskyist and Stalinist Ideological Divergences

It was some time before the Stalinists and the group of Trotskyists decided to form a united front. They were divided on several important issues. Among these were different views on the development of the Soviet Union; the Stalinists' too extensive past dependence on the peasants; and the Trotskyists' charge that the PCI was too conspiratorial and was looking toward coups and insurrections. For their part, the Stalinists tended to see the Trotskyists as nationalists who had just recently become Marxists.¹³

Daniel Hémerly has noted that "in 1930 the Vietnamese Trotskyists applied to Indochina the notion of 'retarded capitalist development,' a combination of the 'artificial

economic revolution' engendered by the French conquest and of the monopoly situation of imperialist influences, to which the weak Vietnamese bourgeoisie contributed its 'rachim economy' and its incapacity to go beyond the agrarian and usurious stages of its development." Consequently, "the capitalist mode of production and exploitation has become preponderant in Indochina."

The Trotskyists argued, according to Hémery, that "the working masses are exploited not by national feudal interests but by a very modern imperialism and by the capitalist means of exploitation. This capitalist means of exploitation is exercised through a combined structure of imperialist and indigenous bourgeois domination." Hence, "Imperialism is not a limited phenomenon on a superficial level of dependent societies which can be expelled by simple rejection, but has penetrated, 'denatured' their basic structures."

The Stalinists, on the other hand, emphasized much more the exterior development of capitalism, used the word "imperialism" much more often in their discussions, and talked about "nonequivalent exchange," which meant emphasis on the continuing feudal nature of Vietnamese society. One Stalinist leader wrote in 1932 that "the liquidators [the Trotskyists] consider Indochina as a new country, a capitalist countryside, they push their theoretical and practical ignorance to the point of affirming that the cause of the misery of the peasantry is its exploitation by the indigenous bourgeoisie. Where, then, are the feudal lord and the landed proprietor?"¹⁴

Hémery went on to note that "from this came the antagonism of the two conceptions of the Vietnamese revolution. Democratic-bourgeoisie for its anti-imperialist and agrarian content for the Communists, it cannot be accomplished in the absence of a truly revolutionary bourgeoisie except under the direction of the proletariat, and then develop according to an 'uninterrupted'

process into the socialist revolution." On the other hand, "Because of the impact of imperialism, on the 'Asiatic' structure of precolonial Vietnam, the Trotskyists thought . . . that there was no possible stop at the bourgeois democratic stage, because there did not exist in Vietnam any historic basis for an autonomous bourgeois development; the emancipation of the peasantry and of the nation implies that the class struggle be carried out under the effective hegemony of the working class, to its proletarian finish, in a word, that there be permanent revolution."¹⁵

The La Lutte Group

Launching of La Lutte

The first tentative steps towards collaboration between the Struggle Group of Trotskyists, led by Ta Thu Thau, and the Stalinists were taken in connection with municipal elections in Saigon on April 30 and May 7, 1933. The two groups named Nguyen Van Tao and Tran Van Thach as their nominees for these elections. They also brought out the first issue of the French-language newspaper *La Lutte* on April 24. The two left candidates were elected, along with four conservative "constitutionalists," but the leftists nominees' election was annulled in August by the authorities.¹⁶

Although the publication of the newspaper had been suspended soon after the election, the independent Marxist Nguyen An Ninh acted as intermediary to bring about the reestablishment of the newspaper and the forging of a more durable alliance between the Trotskyists and Stalinists. His efforts were crowned with success about a year and a half after the election when an agreement was reached and signed by representatives of the two groups.

This agreement called for the joint publication of *La Lutte* and "specified the rules of its functioning: struggle oriented against the colonial power and its constitutionalist

allies, support of the demands of workers and peasants without regard to which of the two groups they were affiliated with, diffusion of classic Marxist thought, rejection of all attacks against the USSR and against either current, collective editing of articles, which would be signed only in case of disagreement." On this basis, *La Lutte* began regular publication on October 4, 1934.¹⁷

The editorial board of the newspaper consisted of three elements: left-wing nationalists, Communists, and Trotskyists. Representing the first of these groups were Nguyen An Ninh, Le Van Thu, and Tran Van Thach; for the Communists there were four people, Nguyen Van Tao, Duong Bach Mai, Nguyen Van Nguyen, and Nguyen Thi Luu; and there were five Trotskyists: Ta Thu Thau, Phan Van Huu, Ho Huu Tuong, Phan Van Chang, and Huynh Van Phuong. The manager was a Frenchman, Edgar Gafnolsky.¹⁸

Communist influence predominated in *La Lutte* until late in 1936. The French police reported a statement by Tran Van Guau, a Communist leader, to the effect that "*La Lutte*, which takes, in spite of certain faults, a Communist position, is more than under our influence; it is practically directed by the party."¹⁹

Early Campaigns of the La Lutte Group

The new paper and the group around it carried out many campaigns. One was constant support of the efforts of the workers to establish unions and to bargain collectively, which became very important and was marked by a large strike wave in late 1936 and early 1937, sparked by the sitdown strikes in France a few months earlier. Another was a drive for the election of a Popular Congress to draw up plans for the future of Vietnam, which involved the establishment of numerous local "action committees" to prepare for the congress, which committees the Trotskyists tended to regard as embryo

soviets. Another was support of left-wing candidates in Cochinchina assembly elections in March 1935, when three Communists and three Trotskyists were nominated in the east and center regions, and the *La Lutte* group got 17 percent of the votes in spite of a highly restrictive franchise and government favoritism for their constitutionalist opponents.²⁰

A high point of electoral activity was the municipal election in Saigon in May 1935, when six *La Lutte* candidates ran, including three workers and three intellectuals.²¹ I. Milton Sacks has noted that in this and other elections "The distinguishing characteristic of *La Lutte's* participation in the municipal elections lay not in its program but in its candidates. These included, for the first time, a number of individuals who could by no stretch of the imagination be considered intellectuals. This ran counter to deep-seated Vietnamese beliefs about being educated, held in particular by the restricted electorate that could vote."²²

In the May 1935 elections four of the *La Lutte* group's six candidates were elected: Tran Van Thach, Nguyen Van Tao, Ta Thu Thau, and Duong Bach Mai.²³ Eventually, however, the elections of Tao, Thau, and Mai were annulled by the authorities.²⁴

During this period the Trotskyists' close collaboration with the Stalinists did not go without criticism even within the Struggle faction of the Trotskyists. Sacks has noted that "Ta Thu Thau . . . had considerable difficulty in convincing many members of *La Lutte* that they should accept Duong Bach Mai as a candidate, since they regarded him as much too 'reformist.' Ta Thu Thau felt that the united front must be maintained and spoke for Duong Bach Mai as the most capable representative of the Vietnamese Stalinists."²⁵

Sacks has indicated other important campaigns of the *La Lutte* group: "It carried on a campaign against the hard life of jailed Vietnamese and called for amnesty of political prisoners. It directly attacked the stereo-

types which many French (and even some Vietnamese) held about the character of the Vietnamese people. . . . To replace the restrictive, unrepresentative institutions that functioned in Indochina, *La Lutte* called for a parliament to be elected by universal suffrage. It championed democratic rights and liberties for all. It called for universal and free education and favored a program of public works. . . ."²⁶

Impact of the Popular Front and the Blum Government

Although the Popular Front government's advent to power in France at first created considerable hope among the *La Lutte* group, the event resulted in only marginal changes in Vietnam. Sacks has noted that "a number of political prisoners were released from jail. A greater measure of civil liberties was allowed, and the revolutionary underground organizations were able to build legal counterparts."²⁷ However, the government of Premier Leon Blum did not, in the end, bring any fundamental change in the colonial status of French Indochina. It did enact some modest legislation on behalf of workers, such as a minimum wage law, and passed very complicated legislation on unions which, although ostensibly providing for their legalization, in fact made it virtually impossible for them to achieve legal recognition.²⁸ Nevertheless, for about a year after the advent of the Popular Front government in France in early 1936 the colonial government did tolerate the de facto organization of substantial numbers of workers.

Perhaps the greatest disappointment of all, insofar as the left-wing Vietnamese were concerned was the failure to provide for any modification of the colonial status of their country. Not only was no kind of really representative government established in Viet Nam, but after long hesitation the Popular Front government rejected the idea of a Popular Congress which had been proposed by

La Lutte and set out to suppress the local action committees which had been established to prepare for the Popular Congress. Colonial Minister Marius Moutet, a Socialist, commented that "I have tried to find a formula which would permit a wide consultation with all elements of the popular [will] and not a so called popular meeting, in reality established under the aegis of the Trotskyist-Communists, intervening in the villages to menace and intimidate the peasant part of the population, taking all authority from the public officials. This formula we have not found, so I cannot permit the meeting of a congress in which the Trotskyists would incontestably be the leaders."²⁹

Trotskyist Activities in Organized Labor

During the period before the Popular Front government's final crackdown on the Vietnamese Left and the breaking up of the united front around *La Lutte*, the Trotskyists made considerable headway, particularly in the labor movement. In the spring of 1937 the Fédération Syndicale du Name Ky was organized under Trotskyist auspices. Its statutes were adopted on May 1.

The Federation had active organizers in at least thirty-nine enterprises in Saigon and Cholon including the important government arsenal plant, "where they were particularly influential," as well as on the railroads, the tramways, in the water and electric company, the France-Asiatic Petroleum Company, several rice processing firms, pottery works, sugar refineries, in the Distilleries de l'Indochine at Binh Tay, and on the docks. Trotskyist influence was predominant in the wave of strikes which occurred in Cochin China in late 1936 and early 1937. Hémeury has noted that "for the Vietnamese Trotskyist movement . . . this is the beginning of a base in the working class of the region of Saigon, the importance of which one can measure by the new fre-

quency of the warnings in the clandestine Communist press against Trotskyism."³⁰

Both Trotskyist factions [the Struggle Group and the October Group] participated in work in the labor movement and in the general upsurge of activity in 1936-37. Hémery has noted that "in Vietnam as in many other countries there seems always to have been maintained the structure of a group without ever truly acquiring that of a broad and solidly organized Party." He partly explained this by noting that Ta Thu Thau was "above all, a tribune." As to the rival October Group, Hémery noted that "after the beginning of the *Militant* in October 1936, the illegal Trotskyist group of Ho Huu Tuong was able . . . to maintain its activity and mount a complete system of clandestine and legal publications, and was on the way to becoming a force to be reckoned with. It published its statutes in the May 1937 number of its journal *Tien Quan* [*L'Avant Garde*]." It was active both in trade union work and in organizing action committees for the proposed Popular Congress.³¹

Trotskyist-Stalinist Divergences Over the Popular Front

In spite of progress made by both Trotskyists and Stalinists under the somewhat more relaxed Vietnamese political atmosphere resulting from the establishment of the Popular Front government in France, there was fundamental disagreement between the Trotskyists—of both groups—and the Stalinists concerning the attitude to be assumed toward the Popular Front and the government it had installed. This disagreement was to bring about the end of the Trotskyist-Stalinist united front in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese Communists, like their French counterparts, were strong proponents of the Popular Front and of the supposedly "antifascist" role which it was playing. Maurice Thorez indicated in his report to the December 1937 congress of the French

Communist Party the relationship between the antifascist struggle and the anticolonial issue in the French Empire. He commented that the interests of the colonial movements had to be subordinated to "defensive antifascism," and added that "if the decisive question at the moment is the victorious struggle against fascism, the interest of the colonial people lies in their union with the people of France and not in an attitude which could favor the efforts of fascism."³²

For its part the Indochinese Communist Party, in a resolution of its Central Committee in March 1937 which advocated the maintenance of the united front with the Trotskyists "and other nationalist currents," nonetheless proclaimed that "the government of Leon Blum is only a capitalist government of a progressive character. . . . It can carry out reforms in favor of the population and thwart the fascists. If we do not support it, it will be overthrown and the fascists will take power. We therefore have the duty to give it our support but we must not forget for that reason the task of training the masses for struggle to defend their immediate interests and to carry on revolutionary education of the population. Our Party doesn't believe that in approving this idea of supporting the Blum government and the French Popular Front it gives up criticism of the metropolitan government and struggle against the barbarous policy of reactionary functionaries in the colony."³³

But the Trotskyists took a radically different position. Their journal *Tien Quan* on May 15, 1937 wrote that "the partisans of the III International persist in supporting the Popular Front, alleging that it is not responsible for the acts of the government of the Popular Front and of the government of Indochina. The reality is that without the support of the Popular Front, there would not be a government of the Popular Front and that, without the confidence accorded by it to [the Governor General], without the confidence given by him to the chiefs of the local administration, and so on, there would

not be the repressions suffered by the Indochinese masses."

Hémery summed up the Trotskyists' position: "For the Trotskyists, imperialism under the regime of the Popular Front remained imperialism. There was no need therefore to change the tactics of the revolutionary movement. After as before 1936 those consisted of the class struggle and of anti-imperialist combats for the long-term objective of a revolution with proletarian leadership and content. And to carry out for themselves in Vietnam the virtually Sisyphean task assigned at that historic moment and everywhere to the international Trotskyist movement: the construction of labor parties which were both revolutionary and associated with the masses."³⁴

In March 1937 the Indochinese Communist Party proposed a new front of Indochinese parties and groups to support the French Popular Front. It should, according to the Stalinists, not only fight against the local authorities' abuses, but "explain the policy of the government of the Popular Front to the population and support this policy. . . . To support the government is a means of legally opposing its local representatives, of exploiting the apparent contradiction between Paris and Hanoi."³⁵

The Trotskyists were strongly opposed to such a front. On the contrary, according to Hémery, they wanted "to play to the maximum the theme of anti-imperialism to obtain the political changes refused by the ministry of Leon Blum. The real international risk is in submitting the colonial struggle to the exigencies of a colonialism labelled antifascism."³⁶

Breakup of the La Lutte United Front

These drastically different points of view with regard to the Popular Front and the general approach to revolutionary activity in Indochina under the Popular Front regime, as well as others with regard to the Moscow Trials and similar issues, spelled

the end to the Trotskyist-Stalinist united front which had been built around *La Lutte*. However, there was clearly considerable reluctance on both sides to destroy an alliance which had served well the purposes of both participating groups.

An important factor leading to the breakup of the *La Lutte* united front was a decisive shift in the balance of power within the group participating in the newspaper. By late 1936 the Trotskyists were winning over to their side the left nationalists, who held the balance of power in the group. Tran Van Thach joined the Trotskyists in October 1936 and Hémery noted "others were going to imitate him."³⁷

As a consequence of this development the tone of *La Lutte* began to change. It began to reprint extensively articles from French Trotskyist publications. One of these was a report on the French Radical Party congress of October 1936, which blamed all of the mistakes of the Popular Front on them and asked rhetorically what could be expected of people who had served in the cabinet of Pierre Laval. On December 31 the Stalinists published in *La Lutte* an "open letter to the La Lutte group" which complained of alleged violations of the united front accord, including the publishing of five articles from the Trotskyist press.³⁸ In February 1937 the paper published an article attacking the Chinese Communist Party for joining forces with the Kuomintang in the battle against the Japanese. An earlier article in December 1936 suggested that there should be a "colonial Zimmerwald" if a new war broke out.³⁹

In March and early April 1937 there was a polemic in the pages of *La Lutte* between the Stalinist Nguyen An Ninh and the Trotskyist Ta Thu Thau over the Indochinese policy of the Paris government. However, the *La Lutte* group published a resolution in the March 21 issue announcing their intention to continue the united front, saying that the disappearance of the paper would be a "formidable retreat" by labor and the "progressive forces."

One reason for heistancy at that time to break up the Trotskyist-Stalinist united front was the fact that the victories of three of the four *La Lutte* people who had been elected in municipal elections shortly before had been cancelled by the authorities. Until new elections were held, in May, both sides were anxious to continue their cooperation. In the new elections the three men involved, Ta Thu Thau, Nguyen Van Tao, and Duong Bach Mai, were reelected.⁴⁰

At that point, however, the maintenance of the unity of the group around *La Lutte* became impossible. On June 9, a final common meeting of the group took place which adopted the proposal of Ta Thu Thau that there be cessation of all attacks against the Popular Front in the newspaper for three months, during which the Ministry of Colonies would be presented with a minimum program demanding amnesty, political freedom, trade union rights, and the purging of the Indochinese administration. The Communists accepted the four points to be sent to the Ministry but rejected the concept of a deadline, "a condition which they felt incompatible with their conception of the Popular Front." As a consequence Nguyen Van Tao, Duong Bach Mai, and Nguyen left *La Lutte*, "which thereupon became the Trotskyist biweekly of the South."⁴¹

There were undoubtedly outside pressures which helped foment the final split between the Trotskyists and Stalinists in the *La Lutte* group. These came particularly from the French Communist Party and the Communist International. Hémyery has noted that on March 3, 1937, Stalin gave a violent anti-Trotskyist speech, after which "the International mobilized to glorify the Moscow Trials." He added that "the deleterious wind which inflated its leading organs brought innumerable polemics to Saigon . . ."

More directly, the Comintern sent instructions to its Vietnamese affiliate, instructions which were signed by Gitton, the administrative secretary of the French Com-

munist Party, and were dated May 10, 1937. These instructions said, "We are surprised that you have not received a letter which we sent there several weeks ago to comrade Mai. In that letter we gave our advice concerning the internal situation of the *La Lutte* group. We consider as impossible the continuation of collaboration between the party and the Trotskyists. In this letter we have also included the complete text of directives we have received for you concerning the attitude to be taken toward the Trotskyists in Indochina. . . . We have received a letter from comrade Nguyen Van Nguyen also on the subject of collaboration with the Trotskyists. We have transmitted that letter to the House [the Communist International] with our personal observations."⁴²

However, William Duiker has noted that "even then, the ICP may not have responded with sufficient alacrity, for in the midsummer a high-ranking member of the PCP [French Communist Party] paid an official visit to Indochina, presumably to convey to the Party leadership in Vietnam the seriousness with which Moscow viewed any further cooperation with Trotskyites in Saigon. After this visit, the collaboration ceased entirely and in succeeding years the two factions competed for support among workers and intellectuals in Saigon—not always to the ICP's advantage."⁴³

Although the breakup of the Trotskyist-Stalinist united front was probably inevitable given the then existing relations between the two groups on an international scale, it may well have been hastened by pressure from the French Communists and the Communist International.

Vietnamese Trotskyism 1937-1939

During the two years following the breakup of the united front around *La Lutte*, the Vietnamese Trotskyists continued to be divided into two groups. From time to time they engaged in polemics with one another, al-

though they generally shared the same platform and ideas.

The Struggle Group organized around Ta Thu Thau seems to have been the official Vietnamese Section of the Fourth International in this period.⁴⁴ It continued to publish *La Lutte* in French and in 1939 began to publish a Vietnamese language version *Tranh Dau* as well. In elections for the Cochinchina Colonial Council in April 1939 three Trotskyists of the Struggle Group, Ta Thu Thau, Tran Van Thach, and Phan Van Hum, got 80 percent of the total vote, "defeating three Constitutionalists, two Stalinists, and several independent representatives . . ." I. Milton Sacks has commented that "this was probably the high point of Trotskyist strength in Indochina in the pre-World War II period. A Trotskyist source claims that they had a Vietnamese membership of three thousand in 1939." Sacks also noted that as the threat of war approached, the Struggle Group established an underground organization in the Saigon-Cholon area.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the October Group continued to be active. It proposed a joint Trotskyist-Stalinist ticket for the 1939 elections, but when the Struggle Group rejected that idea does not seem to have done anything on its own.⁴⁶ Its legal newspaper *Le Militant* was suppressed at the end of 1937 because of its vigorous support of strikes then in progress. However, it quickly began to publish *October* once again as "a semilegal magazine" and also put out *Tia Sang* (*Spark*), first as a weekly and then at the beginning of 1939 as a daily newspaper,⁴⁷ perhaps the only Trotskyist daily then in existence anywhere.

With the outbreak of World War II the Trotskyists were severely repressed. A French law of September 26, 1939, which legally dissolved the French Communist Party, was also applied to Indochina and its enforcement encompassed not only the Stalinists but the Trotskyists as well. I. Milton Sacks has noted that "the French colonial police arrested some two hundred Stalinists

and Trotskyists. The Indochina Communist Party and the Trotskyist groups were driven completely underground."⁴⁸

Vietnamese Trotskyists During World War II

Clearly the Stalinists were better able to maintain their clandestine organization in the face of persecution by the colonial authorities than were the Trotskyists. John Sharpe claimed that this was the case because the Trotskyists were a greater menace to the French authorities than were the Stalinists (a somewhat dubious proposition), because the Stalinists were able to retreat across the border into China and subsequently received aid from both the Chinese and the Americans, and "partly because the Stalinists had begun retreating to clandestinity as early as 1938."⁴⁹

In any case, during the first five years of the war there was little evidence of organized Trotskyist activity in Vietnam. Only within the last year of the conflict did the two Trotskyist groups revive.

The first group to be reconstituted was the October Group, reestablished in August 1944 under the name International Communist League. At that time it had "only several dozen members." However, one Trotskyist source has claimed that "among these were five founders of the Vietnamese Trotskyist movement, each having at least twelve years' experience of revolutionary struggle, and several experienced cadre formerly from the Hanoi section."⁵⁰

In March 1945, the Japanese, who had been occupying French Indochina since September 1940, dispensed with the puppet French administration which they had maintained in place until then. Upon that occasion the International Communist League (ICL) issued a call to "the revolutionary Saigon masses," dated March 24, 1945. This document argued that "The future defeat of Japanese imperialism will set the Indochinese people on the road to national

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liberation. The bourgeoisie and feudalism who cravenly serve the Japanese rulers today will serve equally the Allied imperialist states. The petty-bourgeois nationalists, by their aimless policy, will also be incapable of leading the people towards revolutionary victory. Only the working class, which struggles independently under the flag of the Fourth International, will be able to accomplish the advance guard tasks of the revolution."

The document also denounced the Communists, saying that "the Stalinists of the Third International have already abandoned the working class to group themselves miserably with the 'democratic' imperialisms. They have betrayed the peasants and no longer speak of the agrarian question. If today they march with foreign capitalists, in the future, they will help the class of national exploiters to destroy the revolutionary people in the hours to come."⁵¹

I. Milton Sacks noted that the program of the ICL "called for opposition to imperialism and for support of world revolution, a worker-peasant united front, the creation of people's committees (soviets), establishment of a constituent assembly, arms for the people, seizure of land by the peasants, nationalization of the factories under workers' control, and the creation of the workers' and peasants' government."⁵²

The Struggle Group was also revived shortly before the end of the war. It was reestablished in May-June 1945. Sacks noted that "the difference between the two Trotskyist groups, revolving mainly around the question of relations with the Vietnamese Stalinists, had not been reconciled, though their programs tended to be similar."⁵³ However, a Trotskyist source claimed that the Struggle Group policy differed fundamentally from that of the ICL on at least one issue. For at least some time, the Struggle Group participated in a so-called National United Front, together with the Vietnamese Kuomintang, and the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious sects.⁵⁴

With the collapse of the Japanese and the end of World War II on August 16, 1945, the Stalinists were able almost immediately to seize power through a coalition which they had formed and dominated, which was popularly known as the Viet Minh. Although within a short time British troops arrived in the Cochinchina area and Chinese Nationalist troops in the north, followed after some time by the return of French forces, the Communists continued for some time to control much of the civilian administration of Vietnam. In late 1945 Ho Chi Minh went to France to try to negotiate Vietnamese independence under his leadership, and only after those negotiations failed did the military conflict between the Communist-led forces and their opponents, which was to go on for more than a quarter of a century, get under way.

During the weeks following the end of the war, both Trotskyist groups were very active. However, they followed very different policies. I. Milton Sacks has noted that "as distinct from the Trotskyist Struggle Group, which participated in the United National Front and in the negotiations with the Viet Minh, the International Communist League denounced the Viet Minh as a coalition including bourgeois elements in Vietnamese society; the League called on the masses to complete the revolution that had brought independence by building up People's Committees as organs of state power and by distributing land to the peasants."

Sacks concluded concerning the ICL that "they conceived of their role as equivalent to that of the Bolsheviks vis-à-vis the 1917 Kerensky government in Russia, with the Viet Minh government cast in the role of representative of the bourgeoisie. The International Communist League's agitation for arming the population did strike a respon-

sive chord among other nationalist groups who mistrusted the British and feared loss of their independence."⁵⁵

Although from the beginning the Communists, through the Viet Minh, controlled the northern part of Vietnam, this was not the case in the Saigon area in the south. There the National United Front, of which the Struggle Group was a member, took over effective control. It was not until August 25, nine days after the Japanese surrender, that the Stalinists were able to carry out a bloodless coup and seize power in Saigon.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, on August 21, the National United Front had organized an independence demonstration, attended reportedly by 300,000 people. A Trotskyist source noted that "The Hoa Hao and Cao Dai marched behind the monarchist flag with a delegation of 100,000. The Trotskyists of the International Communist League represented the other main pole of attraction in the march. Behind a huge banner of the Fourth International came a series of placards and banners with the ICL's main slogans. . . . As the banner of the Fourth International appeared, hundreds and thousands of workers who had never forgotten the revolutionary movement of the 1930s flocked behind it. . . . In a matter of a few hours, the contingent of the ICL grew to 30,000."⁵⁷

The ICL was very active after August 16 in establishing "People's Committees" to take over power in local areas. Reportedly, it organized over 150 such groups, about 100 of which were in the Saigon-Cholon area. After the August 21 demonstration, a Provisional Central Committee of nine members (later expanded to fifteen) was set up to coordinate these People's Committees under Trotskyist control.

A Vietnamese Trotskyist, writing in *Quatrième Internationale*, said later that "the ICL led the revolutionary masses through the intermediary of the People's Committees. . . . Despite its numerical weakness, the ICL achieved, for the first time in the history of the Indochinese revolution the

grandiose historic task of creating the People's committee or Soviet."⁵⁸

The People's Committees controlled by the ICL refused to give political support to the Viet Minh government. They also called for armed resistance against the landing of Allied troops in the Saigon region, and demanded arming of the workers and peasants "and took practical steps to carry this out." They also demanded nationalization of all industries and their being placed under the control of the workers.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, the Struggle Group not only had participated in the National United Front and its temporary regime in the south, but also extended their activities to the Hanoi region in the north. There they published a daily newspaper, *Tranh Dau* (*Struggle*), with a reported circulation of some 30,000. They also published a number of books. They were particularly influential in the immediate postwar period in the Bach Mai area.

The Trotskyists of the Struggle Group played at least a minor role in the Viet Minh regime at its inception. Ta Thu Thau was reportedly placed in charge of coordinating flood relief.⁶⁰ For a short while the Struggle Group had a seat in the Southern Committee of the Viet Minh.⁶¹ The Group also had at least a few members of the provisional parliament which the Viet Minh regime established. On one occasion, when the Trotskyist members of this body were interrogating one of the Viet Minh ministers, the minister involved patted his gun and commented that he would answer that question "later," an obvious effort to intimidate the questioner.⁶²

Obliteration of Vietnamese Trotskyism by the Ho Chi Minh Government

Although in August 1945 the Vietnamese Trotskyists were an element of substantial importance in the country's politics, within a few months they had been virtually exter-

minated—politically and for the most part physically—by the Communist government headed by Ho Chi Minh. The few Trotskyists escaping this holocaust were forced to flee abroad.

British troops under the command of General Gracey landed in Saigon on September 10, 1945. They were greeted with banners and slogans of welcome by the Viet Minh regime. However, the International Communist League and the People's Committees under their control denounced the "treason" of the Stalinist regime in not only allowing them to land but welcoming them as well. A manifesto to this effect was issued on September 12.

Two days later, Duong Bach Mai, onetime member of the editorial board of *La Lutte* and now Viet Minh chief of Police in Saigon, ordered the arrest of the leaders of the ICL. At 4 P.M., September 12, 1945, the headquarters of the pro-ICL People's Councils were surrounded by Viet Minh police. According to the ICL account of what followed, "We conducted ourselves as true revolutionary militants. We let ourselves be arrested without using violence against the police, even though we were more numerous and well armed. They took our machine guns and automatic pistols. They sacked our office, breaking furniture, ripping our flags, stealing the typewriters and burning all our papers."⁶³

Seeking to explain this peculiar event, I. Milton Sacks has suggested that "It seems that these Trotskyists still considered that they were part of the same movement as the Stalinists." He then added that "the Viet Minh, for its part, displayed no such tender concern for the 'true militants.' In the months that followed, the leadership of both Trotskyist groups, the Struggle and the October, was decimated. The Stalinists were determined that their authority be accepted over the entire nationalist movement."⁶⁴

"Among those who were shot immediately after their arrest on September 12, 1945, were Lo Ngoc, member of the Central

Committee of the International Communist League, and Nguyen Van Ky, a leading ICL trade unionist. Some ICLers who escaped this first roundup helped to organize some armed resistance in working-class areas. This centered on the Go Vap streetcar depot, where about sixty workers gathered. However, after being forced to retreat into a rural area outside of Saigon, they were overrun in January 1946, and the ICL leader of the resistance, Tranh Dinh Minh, was among those killed."⁶⁵

Soon after rounding up most of the ICL leaders, the Viet Minh government moved against the Struggle Group in the Saigon region. According to one Trotskyist source, the police "surrounding its headquarters in the Thu Duc area . . . arrested the entire group and interned them at Ben Suc. There they were all shot as French troops approached." Among those murdered at this time were Tran Van Thach, Phan Van Huu, Nguyen Van Tao "and tens of other revolutionary militants."⁶⁶

The turn of the Struggle Group leaders in the northern part of the country came not too long afterwards: "A letter to the International Secretariat of the Fourth International . . . spoke of a well-organized but persecuted organization of the Struggle Group in the North. Led by 'Th——' former leader of the Tonkin printers during 1937–38, it held large meetings and published several books in addition to its daily newspaper. One region where the line of the Struggle Group had particular success was Bach Mai. As a result of a large meeting there, Ho Chi Minh gave the order to arrest Th—— and other supporters of the Fourth International. . . . Already a large number of Trotskyists had perished in the resistance. Eventually this group, too, was wiped out entirely by the Stalinist repression!"⁶⁷

The most notorious case was that of Ta Thu Thau, who as we have noted held some sort of position within the Viet Minh regime. Late in 1945 he left Hanoi to go to Saigon, but was arrested on the way. He was

tried three different times by local People's Committees under Viet Minh control, but was acquitted each time. However, "finally, he was simply shot in Quang Ngai in February 1946, on orders from the southern Stalinist leader, Tran Van Giau."⁶⁶

Some controversy has continued to surround the murder of Ta Thu Thau. The historian of the La Lutte united front, Daniel Hémerly, expressed doubt as to whether he was executed on the orders of the top Vietnamese Stalinist leaders.⁶⁹ However, that this was the case seems highly likely. As Rodolphe Prager, the French Trotskyist leader and historiographer, has pointed out, Ta Thu Thau was executed in Central Vietnam, where the officials of the southern part of the country had no jurisdiction, which would seem to indicate that he was done away with on orders from the highest sources.

When Ho Chi Minh was in Paris at the end of 1945 Prager was among those who asked him about how and why the Vietnamese Trotskyist leader had been killed. He replied that Ta Thu Thau and the other Trotskyist leaders were really revolutionaries and that it was a great shame that they had been killed, but that it had been done by local Viet Minh officials under conditions in which it was impossible for those in Hanoi to control what all of the local leaders were doing.⁷⁰

However, during this same trip Ho Chi Minh gave a different reply to Daniel Guérin, a French Socialist leader, who also asked about the fate of Ta Thu Thau and other Trotskyists. According to Guérin, "Thau was a great patriot and we mourn him.' Ho Chi Minh told me with unfeigned emotion. But a moment later he added in a steady voice, 'All those who do not follow the line which I have laid down will be broken.'"⁷¹

Some remnants of Trotskyist influence seem to have continued in the area of the Republic of Vietnam in the south until it was overrun by the Stalinists in 1975. From time to time, for instance, there were reports

of some Trotskyist influence in the trade union movement of South Vietnam.⁷²

Apparently the memories of Ta Thu Thau and some of the other Trotskyist leaders still lingered in Vietnam into the 1980s. During the period of the Vietnam War of the 1960s and 1970s, streets in Saigon were named after Ta Thu Thau and two other Trotskyist leaders. According to reports as late as the early part of 1982, the Stalinist victors in that war had not seen fit to change the names of those streets.⁷³

Vietnamese Trotskyism in Exile

With the physical extermination of most Trotskyist leaders and cadres in Vietnam itself, the major remnants of the Vietnamese Trotskyist movement were to be found in France among the 12,000 Vietnamese said to be living there right after World War II. As many as 500 of them were reported to be members of the Groupe Communiste Internationaliste de Vietnam (GCI—Internationalist Communist Group of Vietnam). The movement published a paper *Tranh Dau* [Struggle] until 1947, when the Groupe held its first congress. Thereafter the paper was known as *Vo San* and was published until 1958.⁷⁴

As a result of a move by the French government to send most of the Vietnamese migrants back to their homeland, about three-quarters of the Trotskyists were deported. They "simply disappeared after their return to Vietnam presumably through capitulation to the Viet Minh Stalinists or liquidation by either the Stalinists or the French."

There were only about seventy Vietnamese Trotskyists left in France by 1952. The GCI included former members of both the Struggle Group and the ICI of Vietnam. The GCI was split at the time of the division in the Fourth International in the early 1950s, with some forty members of the organization reported as supporting the Pablo position, and eighteen backing the anti-Pablo-

ites. The latter put out one issue of a paper, *Cours Nouveau*.

With the establishment of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in 1963 the Vietnamese Trotskyists in France were again united, establishing the Bolshevik-Leninist Group of Vietnam (BLGV). However, after 1964 the BLGV did not have a paper of its own, but participated in editing an anti-Stalinist journal sympathetic to Trotskyism, known as *Quat San*.⁷⁶

It is known that the BLGV continued to exist at least as late as 1974. At that time, it sent a letter to the Tenth World Congress of the United Secretariat. This document, after expressing regret at not being able to be represented at the congress, and noting that it had received little or no aid from either the International or its French section, ended by asking two questions: "(1) Should the International concern itself with a Vietnamese Trotskyist group which has remained loyal to the International and which has carried on against great obstacles, in the most difficult of conditions? (2) Should we work towards creation of a section of the Fourth International in Vietnam?"⁷⁶

It is highly doubtful that any organized Vietnamese Trotskyist group continued to exist either in Vietnam or in France by the early 1980s. At least, at the time of a visit to France in July 1982, none of the several Fourth Internationals with which the author had contact professed to have a Vietnamese affiliate of any kind.

Conclusion

By the early 1980s the history of the Vietnamese Trotskyist movement, which had once been among the most important and influential segments of International Trotskyism, had been all but forgotten by the Trotskyists themselves. There are at least two reasons. In the first place, the very thoroughness of the Stalinist extermination of the Trotskyist leadership in Vietnam left no

outstanding figure of the movement alive to tell about it outside the country, and to continue to be active in one or another faction of the international Trotskyist movement.

However, there is undoubtedly another factor of importance which makes memories of the history of Vietnamese Trotskyism at least embarrassing for International Trotskyism. This was the passion, effort and attention paid by Trotskyists of virtually all countries and all factions to support of the Stalinist side during the long and cruel Vietnam War, which in one form or another went on for thirty years, from 1945 to 1975. With such strong commitment to the "degenerated workers state" of Ho Chi Minh and his successors any memories of what he had done to fellow Trotskyists had to be at least a source of discomfort if not outright embarrassment to the world Trotskyist movement.

Yugoslav Trotskyism

The one country of Eastern Europe in which there apparently never existed an organized Trotskyist movement is Yugoslavia. However, it is clear that Trotsky's ideas were not unknown among Yugoslav Communists. Indeed, as we have noted elsewhere in this volume, the Fourth International had more or less formal contacts with the Tito government immediately following its break with Stalin, between 1948 and 1950.

Dissidents within the Tito regime certainly read some of Trotsky's works in developing their own critiques of the Yugoslav Communist system. At least one of them, Pavlusko Imsirovic, who spent two years in jail in the early 1970s for "setting up an association against the people and the state," and was then one of a group who were arrested a decade later and charged with "forming counter-revolutionary groups" and "attempting to overthrow the social system," gave an interview after being released from jail the second time, in which he proclaimed that "personally, I am a critical Marxist, a communist, a Trotskyist."¹ However, there is no evidence available to us that Imsirovic or anyone else established an avowedly Trotskyist organization in Yugoslavia.



Notes

Origins and Nature of International Trotskyism

- 1 Adam B. Ulam: *Stalin: The Man and His Era*, The Viking Press, New York, 1973, page 216
- 2 For a full account of this struggle, see Isaac Deutscher: *The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky 1921-29*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1959
- 3 Interview with Jay Lovestone, Front Royal, Va., April 20, 1976
- 4 See Stephen F. Cohen's biography of Bukharin: *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution, A Political Biography 1898-1938*, Vintage Books, New York, 1975, for details of this struggle
- 5 See Jules Humbert-Droz: *Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz: Origines et débuts des partis communistes des pays latins 1919-1923*, D. Heidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht-Holland, 1970 for details on Trotsky's role
- 6 See Max Eastman: *Heroes I Have Known: Twelve Who Lived Great Lives*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1942, pages 242-243
- 7 Letter to author by Max Shachtman, December 7, 1970
- 8 Leon Trotsky: *La Era de la Revolución Permanente* (edited by Isaac Deutscher, Ediciones Saeta, Mexico, 1967, pp. 65-66
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Bibliography

In the preface I commented on the nature of the sources used to write this study. Very few other observations on that subject are required at this point. The details of the sources are revealed in the pages that follow.

The items in this bibliography are generally identified rather than "annotated." A few additional comments may be in order about a few of them. It is particularly important to note the significance of the selections and compilations of Leon Trotsky's correspondence and other documents which have been principally the responsibility of George Breitman in the United States and Pierre Broué in France. The Trotsky material itself is very significant for an understanding of the history of Trotskyism in the 1930s, and the annotations by Breitman and Broué are invaluable in providing information about the people and events dealt with or alluded to in the Trotsky documents.

Similarly, two sources of information on the early history of the Trotskyist "international" are of particular importance. These are the single volume published in New York, and the two volumes edited by Rodolphe Prager in Paris, containing the principal documents of the various international conferences of the movement between 1930 and 1948, with annotations which are also very valuable. In addition, the short volume of Pierre Frank provides important data on the congresses of the "Pabloite" faction of the international Trotskyist movement in the 1950s and early 1960s, and *USEC* congresses subsequently.

The sources we have used on the development of International Trotskyism since Trotsky's are much more diversified than those treating with the movement in the 1930s. They constitute the great majority of the citations listed below. Only one comment is necessary concerning these: all those listed have been consulted and the great majority of them have been cited in this study.

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